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After the Revolution

and other

Holiday Fantasies.

BY

WILLIAM WALLACE.

Glasgow:

WILLIAM HODGE & CO.

1893.

to
Charles Russell.

NOTE.

The contents of this book have, in a slightly different form, already appeared in the *Glasgow Herald*, from which they are reprinted by courteous permission.

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AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

THERE was no particular reason why I should have paid a visit to Turveytopsville—I have no shares in its Pier Hotel Company, Limited—except that I happened to have been born there 2500 years ago (it was then known as Topsyturveytown) and so have nearly as magnificent a historical vista behind me as Mr. Edward Bellamy. But Everybody who is not Nobody, like Mr. Anstey (who, by the way, is not Mr. Anstey), Mr. Rider Haggard, Mr. Henry Labouchere, and Mr. George Lewis, has paid a visit to Turveytopsville. It is incumbent on me above all things to be in the fashion; hence it is that I suffer from over-pressure once a month, invariably take the fashionable ailment—be it golf, influenza, the Riviera, or Mr. Rudyard Kipling—go to Private Views and First Nights, look critically at Empire gowns, give up three months in the year to business and nine to pleasure, instead of the other way about, as it used to be, and rave over Meredith, Tolstoi, and Ibsen. I would not for the

world not Look Backward, and so I took the last train from town, *via* the Forth Bridge of course, to Turveytopsville, with the express object of making a study of it for a week.

“Men may change, but man never changes.” So I muttered to myself, epigrammatically, when my train steamed into Turveytopsville. I at once took a note of the epigram, with the object of bringing it out as an impromptu a fortnight or so afterwards in Society. The station was the same as ever—as draughty, as devoid of comforts, as much like a shed. After two thousand years—so I had thought in my ignorance—the substitution of the nationalisation of railways for the cut-throat competition between private companies should have given Scotland fairly good stations, especially as the Department of Locomotion in the national Capital—which was now Oban—was composed entirely of stokers, engine-drivers, and guards. Then, as I emerged from the station to saunter up into the town, hesitating as to whether I should put up at the Waddie Hotel or the Florence Dixie Arms, I saw the same or very similar public-houses, doing a too literally roaring trade, with the old crowd of haggard women and ragged children waiting for the doors to open—and close for the night. I somehow could not help being drawn towards one, near

which two women and quite a little mob of children of all ages and sizes were standing and singing—

Oh father, dear father, come home with me now,
The clock on the steeple strikes one.

The clock on the steeple struck not one, but eleven. The door of the public-house opened, and there staggered or were thrust into the street four men.

"We'll hae some fun," said a bystander; "it's the Principal an' the Bishop just as fou' as ever, and they'll hae a fecht afore they get to their beds."

"Ay," said a neighbour, "and that's the Regius Professor and the Dean tryin' to keep them on their feet; nae muckle better themselves, I'm thinkin'. There'll be a stramash at the next meetin' o' the Boord of Eddication and Releegion, tak' my word for't. John Smith, the saidler, tell't me yesterday that thae ongauns in the College an' the Close cud nae be stud ony langer, and that he'll move that the haill lot be cleared oot next meetin'. Jean Paitter-son—ye ken her, she has a fine manglin' business in John Stuart Blackie Square—is to second the motion. Jean says thae Lower Orders maun get a severe lesson."

"Nae doot, Tammas, nae doot; an' yet, man, I peety the wives, puir bodies. Ye'll mind them in the auld days afore the Revolushn. I think I see the Principal's

wife—she was Miss Hypatia Clytemnestra Girton then—the day she cam' back frae college to her faither's hoose for guid, a' covered wi' maiddles and ribbons. An' ye wauld niver think that puir cratur there, winderin' hoo she'll get the Bishop hame—they say she tak's a dram hersel'—was ance Leddy Ethel Gordon Breadalbane Claverhoose, the belle o' a' the coonty balls. Ay, I was sure o't. They're jist gaun to begin. Whaur's a' the gentlemen o' the pollis? Takin' their twa months at the seaside, I suppose."

By this time the man who had been designated the Principal had straightened himself to some extent. He shook his fist in the face of the Bishop, and roared to his companion,

"I'll have his blood, Regius—his blue blood! Ha! Ha! Let me tell him I don't care a second aorist for all his ante-Nicene Fathers. Can you, sir"—and here he assumed an air of dignity—"can you translate *Quid distat inter Scotum atque sottum?*"

The Bishop rushed forward in an infuriated manner. The wives tried to separate their husbands, and were met with the usual curses and blows. There were no police present—of course. The delighted crowd closed round the combatants. I withdrew from the scene disgusted, and yet as I withdrew I thought I heard a

thin voice gasp out, "It is only a scratch. It was the drink, not my Chrysostom that did it. There is no kinder man in the world than my Chrysostom when he is sober."

I turned to the man whom I had heard addressed as Tammas, and asked him if he would explain to me the meaning of the tragi-comedy I had seen, for, of course, I took it for granted that "Principal," "Bishop," "Regius," and "Dean" were nicknames given by the populace to drunken loafers.

"Treggi-commidy! neeknames! naething o' the sort!" retorted Tammas. "It's a' deed—an' for that maitter deed drunk—airnest. But mebbe ye're no' acquent wi' Turveytopsville."

And here he looked me all over with an air of suspicion. I hastened to say that it was twenty centuries or so since I had set foot in Turveytopsville, but—here I rehearsed my epigram—I found that though men had changed man had not.

"I jaloosed as muckle frae your speakin'. That's the auld-farrant Inglish that used to be tocht in the Boord schules. Oor Paurliament in Oban has changed a' that, and has re-estaiblished the Scottish langidge in a' its glory—in ither words, a kind of compromise atween the Glesca twang an' the Embro' drawl. The Upper Ten mak' a pint o' speekin'

naething but the brodd Dawric o' the *Na*.
Bawrd in polite society."

Then Tammas entered into a lengthy *ex pl*
which I may abbreviate. It seems that *so*
ago—it is no use being particular to a few *yr*
years or so—the British people, led by Mr.
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the artisans in the towns and the ploughmen in th
rural districts—had risen in its might, and by
bloodless Revolution had disestablished and disen
dowed everything and everybody. It had abolished
the Aristocracy and the Middle Class, and taken all
their property, without compensation I need hardly
say, for compensation had long been out of fashion.
The ploughmen and the artisans with their families
were declared the true Upper Class. Culture being
at a discount, members of the learned professions
were degraded to the positions of serfs and Helots,
and—this was a clever stroke of revenge on the part
of the railway employés, who formed a powerful body
in the Oban Parliament—were placed under a Board

of Education and Religion. The degradation had entered into their souls; being named the Lower Class, they relapsed, as I had seen, into the vices of that class, much as the New Englander is becoming a second edition of the Red Indian. Then I said to Tammas, "I suppose that there has been an equal division of all the property that has been taken from the Upper and Middle Classes, and that the people of Scotland generally are leading an idyllic life, each head of a household having a modest but sufficient income."

"That's what was thocht o' an' resolved on afore the Revolushn, an' ivery 'ear at Oban there's a jabber about eekal deveeshn. But atween you an' me"—and here Tammas's voice sank to a whisper—"I see nae signs o't. I ken this, that whenever a plooman got hud o' a coontry hoose at the time of the Revolushn, or a riveter a mairchant's paillis i' the toon, he keepit it and sticks to't yet. In coorse, it's a mairk of distingshin. to be a plooman or a riveter, an' no' a laird or a meelyonaire."

"Yes," said I, "men may change, but man never changes. But what has become of all the members of the old Middle Class and the Aristocracy?" I asked Tammas, who had accompanied me to the

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Then Tammas entered into a lengthy explanation, which I may abbreviate. It seems that some time ago—it is no use being particular to a few hundred years or so—the British people, led by Mr. Gladstone, who was still alive, and had just published a new edition of De Lolme on the British Constitution, with additions and upsettings, had obtained Home Rule All Round. Scotland, in consequence, had secured its Parliament and Executive, and established them in Oban. Then the Democracy—*i.e.*, the artisans in the towns and the ploughmen in the rural districts—had risen in its might, and by a bloodless Revolution had disestablished and disendowed everything and everybody. It had abolished the Aristocracy and the Middle Class, and taken all their property, without compensation I need hardly say, for compensation had long been out of fashion. The ploughmen and the artisans with their families were declared the true Upper Class. Culture being at a discount, members of the learned professions were degraded to the positions of serfs and Helots, and—this was a clever stroke of revenge on the part of the railway employés, who formed a powerful body in the Oban Parliament—were placed under a Board

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"Yes," said I, "men may change, but man never changes. But what has become of all the members of the old Middle Class and the Aristocracy?" I asked Tammas, who had accompanied me to the

door of the Florence Dixie Arms. "Come in and tell me over a glass of whisky all about it."

"Wud ye insult a Scotsman o' the Upper Class," exclaimed Tammas, indignantly, "by asking him to tak' whusky? Whusky is nae mair the nawshonal drink. By orders frae Oban, we've gane back to Alloa yill, and it gangs as faur. It's jist sots like the Principal and the Bishop that drink that vulgar whusky noo."

Tammas had his will and his yill. The settlement of the Middle Class, I ascertained, had been a comparatively easy matter. A Special Commission, composed entirely of crofters, had been appointed by the Oban Parliament to consider the question, and had decided to send the Middle Class in a body to the Sandwich Islands. This had been done. Its members were doing well.

"But what about the Old Aristocracy?" I again asked Tammas.

"Tak' a look roond ye," said he, and grinned, and glanced significantly at the waiter who had just placed a second instalment of yill before him. I looked at the waiter's back. Surely that back had the stamp that marks the caste of Primrose de Bruce. In an instant the whole truth flashed upon me. I had taken what Tammas called "a look roond" when

I entered the Florence Dixie Arms. It seemed altogether what it was under another name two thousand years before, except perhaps that the landlord had a more refined look than the ordinary Boniface, and that the barmaids and chambermaids had a sweetly resigned rather than confident air.

"The landlord is—?" I queried.

"Nane ither than the Deuk o' Strathspey himsel'," again grinned Tammas.

"And the servants?"

"Jist the leddies frae Strathspey Castle. The auld Aristocracy huv dune nae that ill. They hae about a' got seetyashuns under the new aristocracy as butlers, gemmkeepers, coachmen, leddy's-maids, hoosemaids, and the like. An' them that's no suited that way gets on as innkeepers, billiard-markers, professional cricketers or gowffers, dressmakers, an' the like. Man, it's great fun to see a sprig o' the auld nobeelity gled to tak' a saxpence and a sweerin' as a caddie on the links frae ane whase ancestor was only a thoosan' 'ear or sae a journeyman teyler! Weel, weel, gude nicht to ye, and a soun' sleep! Ye'd better gang tae your bed noo, or ye'll be waukened aboot three or fowr o'clock. There's an Assembly o' the new coonty swells the nicht, an' some o' them are pittin' up here."

But I could not take Tammas's advice. In my own

room I sat up meditating on the mutability of human affairs, and still more the immutability of human nature. I was meditating at half-past three when a carriage drove up. I opened my door—such conduct was pardonable under the circumstances—and looked and listened. From the carriage there descended two ladies and a gentleman. One of the ladies, I could see, was buxom and important; the other was more slender; both were in the fullest and richest of evening dress. The elder gave her orders to the coachman—

“Fitzgordon, bring roond the cairrage the morn’s mornin’ at eleeven sherp, to drive Miss Jennie an’ mysel’ to the pannyrammy o’ Stirlin’ Brig. An’ I say, Fitzgordon, you maun drive better than ye did the nicht, or I’ll hae tae pairt wi’ ye.”

“Yes, ma’am,” answered the coachman.

His voice I recognised as that of one who was once on a day the brightest of younger sons, the most dashing of guardsmen. The three others disappeared into the dining-room. In half-an-hour they reappeared.

“Gude nicht to ye, Maister John; an’ thank ye for a’ yer attenshun. Say gude nicht to Maister John, Jennie, and gang awa to your room.”

It’s you and Miss Jennie here that sud get the thanks, Mrs. Maitland. An’—an’, Mrs. Maitland, wud

ye mind me askin' a question at Miss Jennie—about the Sawbath schule, ye ken?"

"Weel, weel, jist half a meenit. It's cauld efter sae muckle heat, an' I winna hae Jennie staunin' lang on the stair."

"I say, Jennie!"

"Yes, Jock."

"Dae ye see the mune, Jennie?"

"Yes, Jock."

"It's a bonny mune, Jennie!"

"Yes, Jock."

"An' I say, Jennie!"

"Yes, Jock."

"I'm thinking, Jennie——"

"Yes, Jock."

"I'm thinkin'—I'm thinkin', Jennie, it's awfu' gude wither for the neeps, Jennie!"

"An' is that a' ye've to say, Jock?"

"Yes—I mean no—Jennie!"

"Weel, gude nicht, Jock."

"Gude nicht, Jennie."

"An' I say, Jock!"

"Yes, Jennie."

"I'm gaun to the pannyrummy the morn's mornin', Jock."

"Sae am I, Jennie!"

I left Turveytopsville by the first train after breakfast the same morning. A walk before that meal had shown me that, in spite of social revolutions, humanity was still its old inhuman self, that Turveytopsville was still Topsyturveytown, and that what we eulogise as progress is but movement in a circle.

FINAL HINTS ON GOLF.

NOT BY MR. HORACE HUTCHINSON.

I HAVE just returned to town and business after a fortnight's carnival—nay, let me rather say, my honeymoon—of golf, and so I have every reason to regard myself as an authority on the subject. I know it is the most pernicious heresy and the direst presumption to say anything of the sort. For have I not been told thousands of times that to be even a moderate player one must be prepared to give up fifty years to the game, that one must be caught young, when the spine can bend like a Toledo, when the shoulder-blades can bow to each other with the easy grace of two young ladies rationally dressed and not in love with anything but lawn tennis? This is all nonsense, moral cowardice, old fogeys' fables. A man who, blessed with good health and an easy conscience, cannot in a fortnight do anything he has set his heart on—tear the Secret

from Hegel, carry off the girl of his affections from selfish parents and a stupid lover, or prepare for an Indian Civil Service examination—should regard himself as practically shelved. For him, if not the game, certainly the glory of the game, of life is over. He must think of himself as an extinct volcano, as one for whom there is now only the fifth-rate paradise of slippered ease, a kettle singing on the hob, cotton wool in the ears, a sofa cushion, and a nap after dinner, with a vision of an old pair crooning "John Anderson, my jo," at the end of the chapter. Of course, to master golf, as to master anything, in a fortnight, you must give yourself up to it entirely. You must eat for it, drink for it, sleep for it, dream of it; you must practise strokes with your umbrella; you must address yourself to a mid-day sandwich, or even to a morning red herring, as if you were addressing yourself to your ball; you must handle your spoon, your fork, even your pen, as if you were handling a club—that is to say, your right hand must never know what the left doth, except that it is assumed to clutch tightly. Above all things, you must be up early, and search for the art of golf as Herman Dousterswivel searched for hidden treasure. It is the early golfer that takes the good hole. He who is unfamiliar with solitary

five-o'clock-in-the-morning golf does not really know its pleasures. Far from the madding crowd's distracting remarks, the proud expert's contumely, and the caddie's thinly-disguised sneer, with no onlooker but a red sun that is rubbing its eyes preparatory to tidying up the universe, and no company except cows with mild sympathetic eyes and silent ball-proof sheep, you stalk anonymously over the links, receiving no instructions, making no mistakes, taking and triumphing over all hazards, and beating the "record" with no one to question your figures. This—and this only—is the ecstasy of golf. It was thus, at any rate, that I won my Genevieve, or, to put the matter technically, that I became a scratch player, to the extent that I no longer tear up the turf—without replacing it, of course—but subject it to a little friction, gentle as that produced by a bath towel. Fresh from the irons—to tell the truth, I am rather weak in that department of the game—who so competent as I to give advice or a word of encouragement to the raw beginner in need of support? At all events I am so pervaded by the enthusiasm of golf that I cannot help giving such advice, even although, oddly enough, no publisher has asked me to write a volume on the subject.

I.—*General Hints.*

This is essentially my little collection of snakes from Iceland. Why should I insult anyone by telling him to keep his temper, not to look daggers or to use imprecations when his partner misses the globe, nor to roll on the turf in agony when he himself fozzles a three-inch putt? Golf should be played by gentlemen with gentlemen; patience and equanimity are the essence of gentlemanliness and of life; and their acquisition may be left to time and conscience. Then, again, I regard it as quite superfluous to warn the beginner that he should not accustom himself to play from a high tee. No sensible man would dream of playing from a high tee; he would not even play from a glass of sherry and a biscuit. Golf is, or should be, the most ascetic of all games. The perfect golfer is a non-smoker, a non-drinker, a small eater, and a long sleeper; a man of porridge, milk, cutlets, and cold water.

II.—*The Fundamental Laws of Golf.*

Most manuals give one such rule, "Keep your eye on the ball." This is a mistake. I can understand keeping one's eye on Paisley, but I do not understand keeping one's eye on the ball. For, as a matter of

fact, all good players keep the eye off the ball, below it, or a quarter of an inch behind it. The cardinal rule, in my more or less humble opinion, is, "Get the ball away." This rule settles many other matters, such as how one should stand when about to project his ball into space, whether, for example, he should at least eighteen times in a round describe an equilateral triangle with the help of his feet and the ball, and then play geometric pranks calculated to make Euclid's hair work out the Binomial Theorem. A man who wishes to get his ball away will in his own good time take his own steps to accomplish this result.

The second cardinal rule of golf is—deal kindly with your ball. Why stand over it in a minatory attitude, and strike it as if it were a personal enemy to be crushed or a heresy to be eradicated? I invariably mutter to myself when I address myself to my ball—

Take it up tenderly, lift it with care,
Fashioned so slenderly, young, and so fair.

See how amiably the club stands beside the ball. It looks as if it would offer its arm to its neighbour and take a walk with it over the links, or take it round its waist—which is precisely what it ought to do—and dance a polka with it. And, after all, it is the club that sends the ball away, not the

player. A gentleman should think of and treat his ball as if it were his betrothed in the first flush—the “Yes, darling,” and “I could lay down my life for you, sweet” stage—of his engagement. Let him say or think “Go, love, go,” and like a bird it will fly from him.

For the other leading rules of golf, Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Horace Hutchinson, Mr. Andrew Lang, Mr. Linskill, Sir Walter Simpson, and other authorities may safely enough be consulted.

III.—*Singles and Foursomes.*

These are golf in a state of war. Everything is fair in golf as in war, except, of course, what the rules of the green and the traditions of the caddies forbid. The great thing is to defeat your opponent or opponents. To accomplish this end a variety of stratagems may honourably be resorted to. Here are a few of them. Keep cool yourself, and, if in a foursome, try to keep your partner cool; but do your best to unnerve and distract your enemy. Thus, when I am going to drive off, I endeavour to do it as if it were the merest bagatelle, such as getting married, or publishing a three-volume novel, or starting on a voyage round the world. If I am unnerved I can always pull myself together by

rolling some large soothing word under the tongue. "Mesopotamia" will do at a pinch, but "Machrihanish," with the penultimate syllable accentuated in the proper Celtic, celestial, dying-fall fashion, will do still better. As regards my partner, when I have one, I always wish I had a pocket-organ from which, just before he is about to drive off, I could pour gentle, sedative oratorio music all over him. But not having this instrument, I do the best I can without it. I never lecture a colleague on his style of play, find fault with him when he does badly, or praise him when he does well—although I may occasionally give his hand an encouraging squeeze, which means volumes of panegyric. When I talk to him I keep off golf and stick to some light and non-controversial subject, such as fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute, bimetallism, the Everlasting No, harvest prospects, or the depression of trade and dividends. It is different with an opponent. Your business is to beat, and therefore to disconcert, him. Your talk should be calculated to irritate his nerves, and get him into trouble. There are admirable opportunities for doing this when you are playing in a foursome, two heads being always worse than one. It is well to find out what difficulties of a personal kind an enemy may be in, and turn them to good account. For ex-

ample, on one occasion, when I was approaching the teeing ground, I sympathised deeply with my rival over a business feud in which he was then engaged. I expressed a hope that he would have the best of it. He is a long driver as a rule, but he hit the ball viciously as he would have struck that scoundrel Smith—in other words, he topped it and spoiled his stroke. At another time one of my two antagonists had, by a pretty shot, landed his ball almost dead on the green. His partner only required to make a fifth-rate putt to win the hole. It was a desperate case, and I resorted to a desperate device. I gently but firmly reminded the man of the £10 I had lent him six months before, and expressed a hope that he would find it convenient to refund the money the following week. The poor wretch missed his putt, and we halved the hole. As a rule, however, the best thing to do with a rival is to give him a large amount of kindly instruction—to tell him in a friendly way that he does not hold his club properly, and that he should try a better style next stroke. This is certain to unhinge him. In golf, as in all things, we suffer from over-education. But I need say no more. Every man must be his own Machiavelli in golf as in politics and in business.

THE HOLIDAY MARTYRDOM.

A REMINISCENCE OF LAST AUTUMN.

"OH, the dreary, dreary moorland! oh, the barren, barren shore!" To this extent my wife, my two eldest daughters, and myself agree with the late Lord Tennyson's view of the Scoto-Anglican fashion of spending two months at the seaside. We have been back from the coast since the first of the month, and as yesterday—having to some extent recovered—we breathed the air of the Queen's Park, and from the flagstaff enjoyed our favourite view of Glasgow, we said, and almost sang, "There's no place like home." And yet the annual holiday season is not without its offsets. 'Tis sweet to know there is an eye has marked our coming, and looked brighter since we came—the eye of the policeman in our district, who has been doing his level best during our absence to discover whether any attempt has been made to rob us, and who will no longer feel

obliged fifteen times a day to ring our door bell and test the window fastenings. Then there is, as my wife says gratefully, so much to be thankful for. We have not come back from the coast all ill, or even any of us seriously ill, as we might have done, or as we have usually done in the past. It is quite true that for three weeks I was in bed half of each day trying to get rid of a cold which the first afternoon that I walked on the beach came out from the sea—I positively saw it coming—and fastened its grip upon me, much as Hawkshaw, the detective in the old play, finally fastens his bracelets upon Jim Dalton. Then, as some one or other of our children has been ailing of something or other all the time of our absence from town, my wife has been little better than an hospital nurse, and, as she says herself, has only seen the sea twice. But then think of the experiences we have had, of the experiences we might have had, and of the experiences others have had! We did not walk blindfold into a house whose previous occupants had had scarlatina, whooping-cough, or measles. We have not come back with the germs of some infectious or contagious disease upon us—or, at all events, these germs have not yet developed themselves. Then we are entitled to lay the flattering unction to our souls

that we are really better off than our neighbours. Our neighbours, in the most literal of senses, are the Penhecks. They went, as their custom is, to a wild and weather-beaten coast, far from the giddy whirl and the madding crowd, roughed it in a fisherman's cottage, and dreamed dreams into which the purification—and, still more, the impurities—of the Clyde never entered. But I have some reason to believe that this lonely and lovely spot, over which my friends have been gushing so effusively, is as blameless of sanitation as it is of society. The water supply is abundant, but then filters are not. Altogether, and from one reason or another, Mrs. Penheck, for whom I have a great regard, has been drooping ever since she returned. She has in her eye the look of typhoid fever; if her husband does not perceive it, I do.

Then there is another reason why the two months at the seaside do us a great deal of good, and ought thankfully to be remembered. They enable us to contrast the comforts of home with the discomforts we put up with when we are away from it. My wife was rather discontented with our tables and chairs, and even with our pots and pans, before we left for the coast. Really we ought to have another drawing-room suite; the stair-carpet was a disgrace

to people in our position; the piano was only fit for the younger children to practise Beethoven, Mozart, and Hamish MacCunn on in the nursery. I hear nothing of all this now. On the contrary, she has been looking on this picture and on this ever since she returned. Really what miserable vegetables you get at these coast places as compared with what you get in Glasgow! Then, how much better is the cookery at one's own house than in apartments at the seaside! There is such a thing as gravy here: it is an unknown quantity in any holiday resorts I know of. Some of them are equal to a joint, none to a chop; as for sweets, the less said about such as are turned out a hundred miles from Sauchiehall Street the better. Then there is some virtue after all in that old semi-grand on which—and love and hope—Sophonisba and I married about a generation ago. I saw her looking at it yesterday with tender thoughtfulness as she dusted it. It occurred to me that it might have brought back to her memories of the period when we called each other “dearest” fifty times a day (and not, as now, on Sundays as a sort of extra course), when, after dinner, she informed me that ever of me she had been fondly dreaming, while I responded, somewhat inconsequently, if not even bigamously, by declaring that

. . .

Orynthia was my beloved, and with "Orynthia" making, if not the rocks and vales, certainly the artists' proofs on the walls, resound. When, however, I tried to ascertain whether I was correct in this impression, I found out, just a little to my mortification as a middle-aged sentimentalist, that she had been thinking we might do very well without a grand, or an iron grand, for a year or two longer. Considering all its faults, she did not love our semi-grand still, but yet it was greatly superior to the squeaky old "cottage" in the apartments at the seaside, from which one could not even extort a remote resemblance to "The Policeman's Lot is not a Happy One," and "Be Queen of my Heart To-night." Coming back from the seaside involves the supreme pleasure of resuscitating old friendships.

Frankly, however, do I admit that the holiday term is a two months' martyrdom, and I have been sometimes tempted to burst all links of habit, and, instead of wandering on from islet unto islet at the gateways of the day, to remain quietly at home, save my money, and do Glasgow, which I have never yet had time to do owing to this seaside tyranny. Our Edinburgh friends, the Walkinshaws, are trying the experiment this year, and, from what we hear, with great success. Walkinshaw set the example last year.

He sent his family down to North Law, while he himself remained in his house in Drumstick Gardens, reading novels with the blinds down, stealing out when darkness descended to have a feast of automatic machines, and otherwise quietly enjoying himself. The whole family have this year followed the example of their head and remained at home. There has been a great saving of money and anxiety. The cost of apartments or a house at North Law has been struck off the year's expenses. No little illnesses, involving a large doctor's bill, have been contracted, and danger from death by a golf ball has been avoided. Then Edinburgh is so deserted, Mrs. Walkinshaw writes to Sophonisba, that she need hardly have been at the trouble to take the usual steps for giving 21 Drumstick Gardens a yellow and forsaken appearance. She has discovered that Edinburgh is a very interesting place from the historical point of view, and that Arthur's Seat is rather steep. She has been to Duddingstone, and possibly she may venture as far as Corstorphine. She would like so much to see the Forth Bridge, as she had heard a great deal about it from American and other friends who have been visiting Edinburgh. But then to go direct from Edinburgh to Queensferry for this purpose would be letting the cat out of the bag with a vengeance. So

she thinks she must make a detour, and approach the Forth Bridge from St. Andrews or Leven, or some place on the Fife coast. Now she would never dream of doing such a nice Bohemian sort of thing as going to Corstorphine or Davidson's Mains were not Everybody who is Somebody in Edinburgh out of it just at present. She and Mr. Walkinshaw mean to make their experiment of this year a regular institution.

I thoroughly believe all that Mrs. Walkinshaw says. The two months' holiday at the seaside is, in my opinion, not a necessity; on the contrary, it is a sham, a conventionality, and a martyrdom. I am absolutely certain that, if I consulted the comfort of my family, as well as my purse, I should insist on our all remaining in Glasgow during the two months, and contenting ourselves with rest from our various vocations and pleasures. But, then, it is precisely because the holiday term is a martyrdom and a conventionality that I think it should be kept up, and that it shall be kept up, so far as my precept and practice can help towards such an end. The illustrious poet who gave the injunction—

Love your neighbour as yourself
As the world you're travelling through,
And never sit down with a tear or a frown,
But paddle your own canoe,

had the root of the matter in him. There is no

doubt whatever as to the desirability of loving one's neighbour as one's self. The difficulty is how to do it, especially in the case of folks who, if not positively wealthy, are yet sufficiently well-off to start life on a semi-grand and "The Pilgrim of Love," and end it with a grand and "John Anderson, my jo." Of course, pew rents, missions, charities, and bazaar swindles are all devices through the employment of which one loves one's neighbour in a practical fashion. What, after all, is love but doing, not what you would like to do, but what somebody else would like you to do? So you show your love for your neighbour in town by going to the seaside because he goes, not because you wish specially to go; and you show your love for your neighbour away from home by putting money in his—sometimes in her—pocket which you would very gladly have kept in your own.

Again, life—at all events, life that is worth living—should give facilities for discipline and penance. According to Bacon—whose precept was, however, very much better than his practice—wife and children are the discipline of humanity. How they are so Bacon never explained. As a matter of fact, however, this is not surprising, as he never explained anything, even how he came by his own

death, except that it was by fowl play. But a man who has been married, as I have been for over a generation, may save—not his bacon, for that is out of the question—but himself the trouble of getting Bacon to explain his words. For he knows by experience, which is quite as often bitter as sweet, that wives and children are the discipline of men because they make men unselfish in spite of themselves. It has always seemed to me one of the oddest things in this oddest of discovered and colonised planets that whenever a man manages in sojourning through it to pick up sixpence, a number of other persons fix themselves upon him, and successfully insist that they must have three-fourths of it, and that he must not only be content with three-halfpence, but that he must proclaim from the house-tops that he is far happier with these three-halfpence than he would have been with the whole sixpence. In practice, this is what matrimony—this is what the discipline of humanity—comes to. But in true martyrdom there is, or ought to be, an element not only of discipline but of penance, which is a strictly individual affair. There is such an element in my case. Nowadays we do not punish the erring soul by thrashing, bleeding, stabbing, or otherwise injuring the body that is unfortunate enough to encase it.

The last relic of the mediæval penance—the cold bath of a winter morning—may be a moral triumph, but it is unquestionably a physical mistake and torture. The spirit of penance—which comes to this, that one ought never to be completely happy, but ought always to have some pain or misery going—is, however, eternal, and takes different guises in different individuals. I myself don't try under-vests of hair or thorns—because, for one thing, flannel suits me better than either. But I go two months to the seaside and run the gauntlet of disease and death. Thus I fulfil my destiny and satisfy my conscience.

THE HEIR OF ALL THE AGES.

CHAPTER I.

THE Race for Edinburgh was drawing to a close for that afternoon. The engine-driver of the Flying Home Ruler was doing his utmost to reach the Waverley Station an hour and a half before the advertised time. With a view to the attainment of this end, and the professional promotion which it might bring him, he had very properly whisked past several stations at which, according to the timetables, he ought to have stopped. He had very nearly pulled up at Dunbar, because the porter in charge had waved several flags of all colours, and had shouted "Dumbaur!" in a delicious accent. But he resisted the temptation and sped on. Overhead a black cloud, two gulls that had a partiality for the remains of English sandwiches, and a professor of aërostatics were keeping pace with the train; while, in the hedges, the sparrows twittered eulogiums on

the champion bicyclist of Great Britain as he showed signs of fulfilling his own prophecy of covering the high road between London and Edinburgh in five hours. In the Scottish capital the east wind was infusing itself into the speeches of the counsel in the great guano case in the First Division, and the gossip of the ladies assembled to discuss bonnets and destroy characters in Mrs. M'Murdstone's drawing-room. Far away in Thrums, Mr. Dishart, Sam'l Mealmaker, Lang Tammas, and Cree Queery were considering the propriety of the first according a favourable answer to a call which had been given to him by a congregation of Auld Lights that was sunk twelve fathom deeper in sin and misery than even that of Thrums. Matters were a little complicated by the fact that it had taken Sandersy Riach, the telegraph boy, six weeks to deliver the telegram conveying the call, because he had first to show it to all the heads of houses in Thrums.

In the corner of a third-class carriage sat the Heir of all the Ages, Mr. Washington Plymouth Hardenberg Aaron Chow-Chow. His father, who was a member of the bargee aristocracy—in Celestial slang, the "Junkers"—of China, having been much struck with an article of Lord Wolseley's in *Macmillan's Magazine*, in which it was stated that the future

of the world lay between the Yankees and the Chinese, married an American laundrywoman in Shanghai. In his veins there flowed the best blood of Asia—Burman, Corean, Lascar, the Great and the Little Andaman—while in hers there flowed the best of America and Africa—Puritan, Jewish, Negro, Red Indian, and German. The first result of this auspicious union was the young man now sitting in the third-class carriage. Having carried off all the certificates and prizes to be had in Pekin, the hat went round for him in Canton, and he was sent to Europe. He carried off a triple first at Oxford and all the scholarships and exhibitions of the Inns of Court in London. He was thoroughly accomplished and admirably unscrupulous. His creed was Agnosticism, with a *soupçon* of Totemism; he was a Socialist, a Dynamiter, and an Anarchist. A volume of "Modern Georgics" that he published in his teens indicated that he was thoroughly orthodox on the land question. He neither drank nor smoked; he lived on cauliflower when he could get it, and on watercress when he could not. His three heroes were Napoleon the First, Umslopogaas in "Allan Quatermain," and the Whitechapel Murderer. At this moment he was restudying Umslopogaas, for, although a friend had at King's Cross thrust into his hands

all the magazines for the month, some twenty in number, containing articles by Mr. Andrew Lang, saying, "Rather a poor show for Andrew this month," he had read them in an hour. His destination was Cockieleekie Hall, a few miles out of Edinburgh, on the way to North Berwick, the seat of the Marquis of Tillietudlem, Prime Minister of Great Britain. The Marquis desired a walking encyclopædia for private secretary. He secured what he wished in Mr. Chow-Chow. Chow-Chow, having reached the end of Umslopogaas' last massacre, was wondering whether his chief, who had himself been united to a Russian Princess of the Blood, had a daughter whom he should care to marry.

CHAPTER II.

A roar like a Wagner orchestra without a conductor ! A scrunch like a thousand teeth being drawn at once and without laughing-gas ! The Flying Home Ruler dashes into a coal train at Portobello Station, whose lubberly driver could not get out of the way in time. The Home Ruler is telescoped, then microscoped. First-class carriages rush into thirds, as the upper crust and the lower paste are in the habit of doing at a period of social revolution. Chow-Chow, propelled through space, yet firmly clutching "Allan

Quatermain," came into sweetest collision with a lithe and lissom figure, whose curves and undulations, neither a tailor-made ulster nor the crisis of the moment could prevent him from perceiving. The well-known law of dynamics prevailed. The impact sent them, clasped in each other's arms, soaring above the wrecked train, and over two sheds, on to the platform of the local railway, known in the immortal rhyme and reason of the local poet as "The Edinburgh, Leith, Portobello, Musselburgh, and Dalkeith." As they disentangled themselves he observed that she had Gaboriau's "Lecoq, the Detective," in her ulster pocket. At once he recognised in her a kindred spirit, and "My own darling" burst impulsively from his lips.

After a pause, she said, "I fear we must introduce ourselves to each other. I am Lady Olga Kaskovodka Dods, second daughter of the Marquis of Tillietudlem."

"My name is Chow-Chow, at your Ladyship's service."

"Oh! Papa's new private secretary, I presume? In that case, would you be so very good as to telegraph to Edinburgh to MacReekie's cab-office for a hansom? I can hardly expect papa to send a carriage from Cockieleekie Hall at this hour. Here is my purse. When the driver comes he is sure to say, in answer to an inquiry about his fare, and in the

funny dialect of Mid-Lothian, 'I'm thinkin' it'll be a bit sma' maitter o' fower shillins and saxpence. Ye see, it'll be a shillin' to the heid o' Portibellie Road, an' anither shillin' to the heid o' the Craumond Brig Close, an' anither shillin' to the heid'—here please interrupt (for he can understand nothing but the dialect)—'Hud yer blethers, I'll no gie ye a baw-bee mair than the fower shillins, and drive the leddy hame at ance, or I'll bring ye afore Biley Whiteweskit, and he'll sentence ye, as shure as ye're a leevin sinner, to therty days.' I am so sorry to give you so much trouble, Mr. Chow-Chow; but I am on my way home from Girton, where I have graduated as dux of all the schools and stroke of the *Goldenhair*. I had four maids with me and three footmen, but I am afraid there is nothing left of them but half a pocket-handkerchief and a little powder."

"Do not mention it, Lady Olga; your wish is my law. May I venture to contemplate in the dim and distant future repeating the observation I made when we met?"

"Not to-day, Mr. Chow-Chow—thanks so much."

CHAPTER III.

Chow-Chow was a perfect success both at Cockie-leekie Hall, near North Berwick, and in Tillietudlem

House, Mayfair. He wrote charades, and acted so divinely in them that Lady Maud Terrebene, the Marchioness of Tillietudlem's bosom friend, whispered to her on one occasion, "I could elope with that man, dearly as I love my poor old Gussie and my fourteen little pets at home." He was unrivalled in acrostics, lawn tennis, euchre, Badminton, salon-skittles, and the fashionable jack-in-the-box shake of the hand. He gave such dainty Sunday Agnostic lectures in the Blue Drawing-room in Tillietudlem House that bosoms and *bottines* quivered, and the Dean's daughter whispered to the Bishop's wife, "Am I a Christian, do you think, Patricia, dear?" and the Bishop's wife replied, "I am not quite sure, my poor little Jacobina, that I am not just a little tiny bit of a Buddhist." He wrote *vers de société* for *The Boudoir*, armchair politics for the quarterlies, and monthly high jinks for the *International Provider*. A work of his on "Tip-top Africa" caused three expeditions to be sent by Great Britain, France, and Germany into the Dark Continent, and led to an amount of slaughter that must have made Allan Quatermain swallow Goode's eye-glass and five other glasses of another kind with delight. About one of the three novels, dealing with Society and Slummery, which he published within a year, the leading politician of the time, who read it

over his morning marmalade, wrote him: "I have perused 'The Mormonomania of a Melancholic Millionaire' with pleasure. I have found it as interesting as a Homeric glossary or a tract in favour of the total abolition of Welsh rarebits." Chow-Chow did all the writing and three-fourths of the thinking for his chief, who, when he was told that his secretary's pamphlet in favour of Home Rule for Scotland had been adopted with acclamation by all the caucuses, thanked him by saying of him, "Yes, Chow-Chow is not half a bad fellow." As for Lady Tillietudlem, *née* Sophie Neetpliski, she could only give her opinion of him in her pretty piquant Russo-Scottish by saying, "That young man is a perfect Admiral Crichton."

Yet Lady Olga herself seemed as far off from Chow-Chow as ever. Curiously enough, they did not embrace again as at Portobello Station, though they did exchange detective stories frequently and glances now and then. He was puzzled to make out how it was that, while he succeeded with everybody else, he made no progress with her. One afternoon, as he was about to enter the Terra-Cotta Drawing-room, he overheard Lady Olga say to the Marchioness, "No, mamma, I am sorry to seem disobedient, but I cannot marry either Lord Sheepshead or Baron Sleepyhollow. The man I marry must be one of

Nature's noblemen—call him assassin, swindler, conqueror, benefactor, what you will. If only he is strong, masterful, resourceful, loves me, and has £40,000—I cannot see my way to dress on less—I should marry him. Give me greatness—a great forger, a great thief, a great detective—and I may be content. But conventional weakness I cannot tolerate.”

“There is much in what you say, *carissima mia*,” sighed the Marchioness, “but where can you find this paragon?”

Chow-Chow looked reflective for a moment. A gleam as of steel came into his eyes; a bright smile rippled his noble and mobile features.

CHAPTER IV.

About this time the jaded Metropolis was amused and edified by an extraordinary series of “removals”—the word “murder” had been given up by this time as vulgar and unscientific—which occurred in different quarters, but which all presented the same characteristics. The removed man invariably had his carotid artery cut, painlessly and scientifically, with a pen-knife. He always belonged to the same natural (or unnatural) order of human beings. He might be a turtle-fed city man travelling by the

Pullman car to Brighton, or a soapboiler crossing Hampstead Heath, or a bloated journalist taking the air on Clapham Common, or a costermonger crying "All 'ot." But he was invariably a rich, useless, selfish creature, whose relatives were glad to be rid of him. As invariably he had £2000 on his person, which sum was removed as neatly as his life. The Chief of Scotland Yard received punctually on the morning before one of these events, which quite brightened up a dull season, a postcard with these words in large text, "Removal will be effected to-morrow in town or country.—Robert the Pen-knifer." But, of course, this worthy officer took no steps to track the Pen-knifer, who was universally accounted a philanthropist. There was some talk about bloodhounds and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, but it came to nothing. The authors of "The New Arabian Nights" and "Better Dead" were arrested and plank-bedded for three months on the ground that their writings might have stimulated the Pen-knifer to his highly original form of beneficent activity. But this was regarded as a rich joke, and by none more than by the amiable authors themselves, who, besides, were pleased to obtain lodgings and new ideas gratis from the community.

When the list of removals had reached a score they ceased. Two days after the last, Mr. Chow-Chow solicited a private interview with Lady Olga Kaskovodka Dods. He was allowed it. A man of few words—when it suited him—he said, “Lady Olga, I have loved you ever since we collided. I have £40,000; I have distinguished myself. Will you allow me again to say, ‘My own darling?’”

“But have you distinguished yourself by extinguishing others?” And Lady Olga gave him a look which pierced him to the spine.

“By the faith of an Agnostic Totem, I have.”

“Then you may,” and she fell into his arms. After remaining there the usual number of minutes, she said, “But will papa consent, Washington dearest?”

“I think he will, Olga darling, but I’ll see at once.”

He did. He knocked at the door of what Lord Tillietudlem humorously styled his “study.”

“Can I have a word with you, my lord?”

“Three if you like, Chow-Chow, old fellow.”

Chow-Chow left the study the accepted lover of Lady Olga. Shortly afterwards Lady Tillietudlem entered the study. She found her husband looking

pale, and fumbling about his neck. Tenderly she put her arm with a quick motion round it. To her surprise, he started to his feet and pushed her away.


"Tillietudlem, love, what is it?" she asked reproachfully.

"Oh, oh, nothing, Neetpliski, pet, only these collars feel as tight as the political situation. Don't you think you should get 'seventeens' instead of 'sixteen-and-a-halves' after this? Surely it is a horribly depressing day. I wonder if these thirsty dogs, Sheepshead and Sleepyhollow, polished off all the curaçoa last night?"

"I'll ring and ascertain, my own Tillietudlem."

CHAPTER V.

Ten years later. Chow-Chow is now a peer of the realm and Foreign Secretary. The ordinary number of children climb on his knees. Lady Olga is proud of her husband's triumphs, and yet sometimes a look of dissatisfaction comes into her eyes as she glances at him. Again London is startled by a series of removals not unlike those effected by Robert the Pen-knifer. But they are more clumsily executed; the just as well as the unjust are removed. This perceptibly annoys Lady Olga's



husband. After he reads the story of a fresh murder of a morning, he ejaculates impatiently, "Pshaw!" "Bungler!" "Idiot!" "Fool!" One night Lady Olga finds him walking and muttering in his sleep. Fondly she follows him as he goes into his library, unlocks a secret drawer, takes out and lovingly handles a little pen-knife. She looks over his shoulder and sees—all, all, all.

"Then you are, you are ——?" after arousing him.

"I am, I am—Robert the Pen-knifer!"

She threw herself on her knees, and in piteous yet bewitching accents implored him, "Can you forgive me, my darling husband, for being unjust to you all these years? Not once did I think that you were—say the precious words once more, my Washington—Robert the Pen-knifer. I am the happiest woman alive, for I am the wife, not of the greatest forger, but of the greatest remover of the day. Say you forgive me."

With sweet graciousness Lord Chow-Chow raised his wife. Once more his arms enfolded her. Once more, as in the dear old Portobello days, he said passionately, "My own darling," and as he fondly combed his wife's still golden hair with the precious pen-knife, he said, "Yes, Olga, my love, your

children will—nay, shall—rise up and call you blessed.”

“But may they not share my new-found bliss and glory, and call you Robert the Pen-knifer?”

“Perhaps not just yet, Olga. You see, I am to be Prime Minister next week, and the Sovereign might not look on my past history as you do. For a little longer, darling, let us keep this sweet secret to ourselves.”

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR MEN ?

MAN who is born to matrimony is also born to mild hypocrisy. So, although, of course, I profoundly sympathised with my poor wife on Saturday of last week when I found her crying her fifty-year-old heart out on the drawing-room couch just as if she had been nineteen, and had convinced herself that some other girl had been "better *coiffée* and *chaussée*" than herself at her latest party, I secretly rejoiced. She said, between sobs, that she had that day received the greatest disappointment of her life. She required twenty-five coat dresses within a week, but although she had gone to all the good, and, indeed, all the "possible," dressmakers in town, she had been told that, owing to "the extraordinary demands made by our regular customers," &c., she could only be assured of five—a yacht dress, a cutter dress, a band dress, a beach dress, and a looking-on-at-lawn-tennis dress. With such a miserable wardrobe she would never be able to look in the face the Penhecks and the

M'Pringles and all the other folks from Bellapigott and Ursalair, whom she expected to meet at Cliffhead, which will be all the rage this year because its climate is of the most accommodating character, being Quite Bracing at seven in the morning and Quite Relaxing at four in the afternoon. She was the most unfortunate creature in the world! She might have known that this would be a very fine year, and ought, in consequence, to have had her dresses made ages ago. I rejoiced inwardly, as I have said. Scottish husbands have, of course, only the sweetest of saints for their wives, but there is a pretty general impression that they have been rather sore saints to our purses this year, and that, indeed, is the chief result of the superb weather we have recently enjoyed. Still, five dresses do not make such a formidable raid on one's cheque-book as do twenty-five. It was this delight at my wife's failure to gratify her wishes at the expense of my bank balance that made me, with an utter want of discretion, ask whether women—I did *not* commit the now unpardonable atrocity of saying "ladies"—really needed so many dresses. I was even so far left to myself as to condescend on particulars, and to enquire of Anastasia if both a yacht dress and a cutter dress could possibly be required. This brought on

a fresh flood of tears. My question was so like a man. Men were so selfish and stupid, or else I must have known that serge is the only wear for a yacht, and nun's veiling the only wear for a cutter. To appear in serge on board a cutter, or in nun's veiling on board a yacht, would simply show that you didn't know anything. If she was not the most kept-down woman in all Ursalair, she would have had a yawl dress and a cup-day dress as well.

So far all went well. Anastasia was altogether inconsolable till the change in the weather took place. Her tears began to dry up, however, as Nature's began to flow. On Thursday, and in spite of the fact that even then her five dresses had not arrived, she looked quite her dear old—she *is* dear, but she does not *look* old—self. She talked a great deal in a way that was touching, and indeed edifying, about “the blessed rain,” and how much the country needed it, and how the farmers would have at last something not to grumble but to rejoice over. One must not be too selfish! (Here Anastasia turned up her eyes, and looked a perfect Madonna in a tailor-made costume which fits her like a halo or a glove.) How thankful she ought to be she had ordered only five dresses; really, one ought not to rely too much on the continuance of fine weather in so


changeable a climate as ours. Once more I found myself so pleased that I must needs put my foot in it. I said Yes. How lucky it was, I declared, that she had been unable to get all the dresses made that she had wished! Then Anastasia turned upon me again, but this time more in anger than in sorrow. That was just like me. (I don't know anything that is unpleasant which is *not* just like me). Did I really think she was going to the coast to mope in the house all day, even if it should be wet? It would be very unhealthy to do anything of the kind. Besides, there was no necessity for it. She would simply change her plans; she would have all her dresses made in waterproof. Such sweet things could be made in waterproof nowadays, and such a variety; and, to tell the truth, there are few towns in the country where so much can be got in the waterproof way as Glasgow, for the very good reason that there are few towns where so much can be had in the way of water itself! She would simply have her other twenty dresses made in waterproof, and then she would have waterproof hats to match, and waterproof cloaks, and waterproof boots. (There is really nothing half so sweet as a dainty waterproof *bottine* looking out from beneath a waterproof costume, like Juliet looking out from the lattice and

wondering, Wherefore art thou Romeo—and not Tybalt, or even Mercutio?) And then the weather may not be always like this, you know, dear! It may be broken in July, and perhaps even for a portion of August. But it is sure to be fine all September, and then the twenty dresses will come in nicely after all. The only difference will be that the dressmakers will be able to do full justice to them, and finish them (not to speak of their accounts) so nicely. And talking of waterproofs, dear, don't you think that, as we are sure to be yachting and yawling, cuttering and steamboating, you should get a few more waterproof cloaks yourself?

I see how it is going to be. There will be enough of broken weather in August for Anastasia to disport herself in her waterproofs. Then the splendour of summer will return in September, and Anastasia will blossom out in all her glory of serge and nun's veiling, and cashmere and muslin and grenadine in all shades and shapes. And then, so far from being able to crow over Penheck and M'Pringle in the matter of my cheque-book, I shall—but I must decline to look any further into the dismal future.

I have the abiding consolation, however, that if these two fine months of April and May have given me much to groan over, I am simply one in a crowd

in this matter. From all quarters one hears the same story—"Never was there such a year for dress as this!" and that means in turn, Never was there such a year for the folks that make and for the folks that wear dresses! For the last six weeks I have been biting my fingers because I did not take the two shares that were offered me a couple of years ago in the newly-formed firm of Madame Sylvie et Cie. Madame Sylvie is in reality the youngest daughter of a hundred earls, and went into dressmaking on account of the *res angusta domi*. When I was offered the two shares I declined them, on the ground that so accomplished, beautiful, and gently nurtured a creature as Lady Ethelinda Bois-Gilbert (i.e., Madame Sylvie) would not make a good manager of a business. I never committed a greater mistake in my life. Lady Ethelinda has turned her talents and attractions to the best purpose; and her assistants affirm that she is as hard as her own filbert nails. So well has the business of Madame Sylvie et Cie. prospered, especially during the present year, that the shares which might have been mine would have paid for the year's holiday, Anastasia's dresses and all, and would have allowed me to go to Norway as well. Then the wearers of dresses have, during these past two months, been quite as busy and expensive in



their own way as the makers of them. The butterfly side of our domestic angels has been exhibited as during the past few years it has been found impossible to exhibit it. It has been dress, dress, dress—buying dresses, making dresses, fitting on dresses, making hats, boots, gloves, sunshades, husbands and children match with dresses—from morning to night. Woman—the gratification of her pleasures, the enhancement of her attractions—has been everything. Man, poor old man! with his wants, his necessities, and his fancies, has been nothing. He is, of course, useful occasionally as a sort of human watch-dog or retriever; and besides, his cheque-book, which is supposed to be inexhaustible, comes in handy during such a time as we have lately had.

April and May have in fact marked the social culmination of a revolution which has been going on for some time, and which has for its object the Deposition of Man, and the raising of Woman to such an undoubted paramountcy as is accorded to the Empress in China. Some little political formalities have still to be gone through. All Women must be enfranchised. None but Women must be allowed to apply for seats in the House of Commons or in the County Councils. But the working out of these

little details is a matter of time. Already the great domestic revolution is practically complete. Man is, by compulsion, an altruist. He is not allowed to live for himself—except to the small extent indicated by an occasional cigar and the loan of a latchkey. He lives for his Wife and Baby. Baby has rendered most invaluable help in bringing about the Deposition of Man. Indeed, what with “Hush! don’t speak loud or you’ll hurt Baby’s nerves,” and “Don’t laugh for you’ll set Baby a bad example,” and “Do walk quietly for you’ll waken poor Baby,” and even “Take an example by Baby, he is so good and gentle”—Man has been reduced to be a bent, weak-kneed *roi fainéant* who cannot call his house his own, but creeps through it and through life in a sort of moral list slippers.

And now that the Chinese Empire of Women has been established in this country, is it not high time that the question were asked them, “What will you do with Your Men?” There need be the less compunction in asking the question because the other problems, what shall we do with Our Boys? and what shall we do with Our Girls? have been to all intents and purposes solved. We send Our Boys—all of them, that is to say, who do not elect to become professional cricketers or lawn-tennis players—to the

Dark Continent. Mrs. M'Pringle told me the other day of the encouraging letter she had just had from her eldest boy, who is a naturalist, or a storekeeper, or a commissionaire, or something or other on the Congo. He had had five fevers in the course of six months; the white ants ate up a plank bed every night, and the Dervishes were advancing in thousands on the little settlement to which he was attached. But then he was so happy. It was ever so much better to live thus than to be loafing about at home. Then we make Our Girls elementary teachers in Board schools. They begin with salaries of £200 a year, rising to £1000, and have four months' vacation, with three weeks at Christmas. Or we send them to the Schools for Cookery, where they learn to dress chops as daintily as they dress themselves. Or—and this is the chief craze of the time—they become hospital Nurses. Mrs. M'Pringle's second daughter is a Nurse—a Sister Anne, or Sister somebody—and works seventeen hours a day. To judge from the portrait in professional dress which she has sent home, that get-up might be described as no waist to speak of, and a great deal of starch about the head. Her father said, in his brutal way—no doubt he had been dining at the Club—that it was “Mutch ado about nothing.” But she writes

home very enthusiastically about her work. The doctors—even the young ones—are all so nice, and then she had such a love of a broken nose to attend to the other day. As for Our Babies, they do not require any looking after. They are remarkably capable of looking after themselves, and have indeed constituted themselves the Adjutants-General of Our Women (I beg their pardon, Our Empresses) in the great war which has ended in the Deposition of Man.

I frankly confess that, as I do not myself belong to the dominant sex, I am not qualified to answer the question which, with bated breath, I put to its members—"What will you do with Your Men?" You cannot get rid of us, it is plain. You cannot send us to the Congo; we are not all fitted to stand fevers at the rate of one a month. You cannot make us elementary teachers or *chefs*—I only wish you could. As for nursing, I have no objection to being nursed by a pretty Sister with sympathetic eyes and soft caressing hands, even if the official costumier should have given her a waist like that of the Venus of Milo. Indeed, when I have been over-governed at home, I have thought of arranging to get myself run over by a tram-car just to see what sort of a nurse Anastasia would make. But I could not nurse anyone myself; I have not the art, and I am

afraid I have not the heart. Besides, and in spite of all our faults, you love us—at all events, you appreciate our cheque-books—still. That being the case, while I do not presume to answer the question I have proposed, may I venture to hint by way of a mild suggestion that the best thing you can do with your Men is to let them not severely but gently alone? Do not make our homes houses of correction. Give us credit for a little more unselfishness, though it may be only of the silent sort. After all, have Women who require twenty-five dresses apiece for the coast much right to charge Men with selfishness? Of course, they may say that they do this to please their Men, and that in consequence their selfishness has an unselfish side. Agreed, but let there be a *quid pro quo*. If Men find their self-sacrifice—pretty well down in their purses occasionally—in taking a delight in their wives' selfishness, or at all events in their wives' delight in self-adornment, why should not wives in turn find their reward in giving their Men a little of their own way in what are still nominally their own houses? In any case, it should not be forgotten that the poorest of worms may turn. The formation of a Husbands' Defence League would indeed mark a momentous crisis in the history of this poor old century.

THE MYSTERY OF BOWLING ROAD.

CHAPTER I.

"THE question," said Detective-in-Chief Lecoq M'Clewer, partly to himself and partly to Police-Sergeant 3003, who was sitting in his bureau ostensibly waiting for instructions, "is really not so much who killed Robin Cox as who can by any possibility not have killed Robin Cox." The Great Human Sleuthhound's view of the case was much the same as that of the General Public. Only—the deep significance of this circumstance will be perceived later on—the General Public had arrived at the same opinion as the Great Human Sleuthhound exactly 25 hours 17 minutes and 48 seconds before him.

One thing, indeed, had apparently been ascertained. Robin Cox was dead. Detective-in-Chief M'Clewer had said so with an air of authority after the body had been taken to his bureau. He sent Police-

Sergeant 3003 for the usual restoratives—the brandy bottle, the galvanic battery, and the darning needle, which are all kept on the premises—and—the *sergeant was out of the room exactly 42 seconds*—tried them all, but without avail. Constable P. Q., who had been summoned by a Wagnerian chorus of “Murder” into the third flat of 1719 Bowling Road, declared that Robin Cox’s heart had ceased to beat when he placed his hand where an ordinary human heart ought to be. The seventeen persons of both sexes who had been found shrieking in octaves of different ranges of stridency over the body when P. Q. entered the room, agreed upon one thing, and upon one thing only—that Robin Cox was dead when they appeared upon the ghastly scene. An investigation into the deceased’s (?) career indicated that he had been up to every trick under the sun, and even under the earth; for a time he had actually passed himself off as Box. So Detective-in-Chief M’Clewes had a jury of mesmerists, hypnotisers, and fasting men empanelled and confronted with the body. Nor had he read “The Master of Ballantrae” in vain. On the contrary, he summoned that eminent Indian druggee-thuggist, Jibberee Jabberee, to his aid, and asked him if Robin Cox was dead, or was only taking a long diplomatic narcotised sleep. The verdict of all the specialists

was that Robin Cox was dead as a door nail, or as all of the Doges but one.

But when did Robin Cox die? Detective-in-Chief M'Clewer asked this question of himself, so to speak, in italics. It seemed to trouble him almost as much as the other problem, who did not kill Robin Cox?

CHAPTER II.

One or two nuggets of fact embedded in huge masses of fiction were discovered as to the antecedents of Robin Cox in the course of the various inquiries, judicial and irresponsible, which were made into the causes of his death. The only matter to be regretted in connection with these discoveries was that they proved too much against too many people. When P. Q. entered the room in which the body of Robin Cox was found, there were, as has already been noted, no fewer than seventeen persons there before him. Each of these had good cause for bringing about the death of Robin Cox: a French jury would have found "extenuating circumstances" for such action; an American jury would have said "Served him right," and handed each criminal round to be kissed.

Robin Cox professed to be a Scotsman when he first came to lodge with Mrs. Janet Tod in 1719

Bowling Road. But he was, as Sir Charles Russell would have said, "a living lie." No Scotsman is ever styled "Robin." Besides, Cox always said "Good morning" or "Good evening" to Mrs. Tod when he saw her, and not "A fine day" or "A coorse nicht." He professed also to be a riveter and not to make more than £7 a week, even when on strike. Mrs. Tod's opinion was, however, that he never worked at all. He did not live like an ordinary riveter, but like a Prince or the Treasurer of a Trade Union. It was ascertained from papers found on his person that he was a member of three Unions and four International Societies. The seven letters which he had received some days before his death contained threats of assassination on the ground of his being a traitor to various causes, including those of Labour, Anarchy, and the Rights of Poverty and Murder. The writers of all seven were found in the room with Robin Cox's body, and each solemnly averred that he had seen the others flourishing over the deceased knives of the Phoenix Park pattern. Robin Cox, it was further discovered, had had experiences of matrimony. He had, indeed, been married four times, had deserted all his wives, and had pretended to be drowned. Every one of the four, on the faith of what she considered a blessed release, had married again. Nemesis had, however,

tracked Robin Cox, as, indeed, is a habit with Nemesis; and in consequence the four wives with their four husbands had put in an appearance in 1719 Bowling Road. Then Robin, who evidently had rather a taking style with the sex, had stolen the heart of pretty Kate Tod, his landlady's daughter. She admitted that the enticing style in which he was in the habit of saying "Good morning" was more than she could withstand. They had become engaged, and the arrangement was that they were to be married after the next strike, when Cox expected to have £10 a week. Kate had, however, discovered Robin in his true character of much-married man at the same moment as everybody else, and was in consequence transformed into an Avenging Fury. She frankly admitted in open Court, as well as to the interviewers and artists of the newspapers who came to make her famous for ever, that she fully intended to murder Robin at the very time when he was discovered to be dead. She further confessed that, two days before the discovery in the Bowling Road, she had written to a sweetheart whom she had jilted for Robin Cox with his superior fortune and attractions—a joiner who, in consequence of a weak-kneed incapacity for going on strike, earned only £6 a week. The joiner had, of course, been a

lodger with Mrs. Tod prior to the appearance of Robin Cox on the scene. Indeed, she admitted to having been engaged to six lodgers in succession. In this letter she asked the joiner, without anything like beating about the bush, to give his help in avenging her upon Cox, who deserved to die, she affirmed, not because he had treated her rather shabbily in getting engaged to her while he was married, but—she had been reading a course of French novels shortly before—as a warning to other men of the same type not to do likewise. (Murder had come to be recognised by this time not only as one of the fine arts, but as—see Blackengarde, Blumentheefe, and other German authorities—an integral portion of the punitive code of Humanity under the Positivist *régime*.) On condition of the joiner doing this little favour, bringing his most clean-cutting knife for the purpose, and promising to go on strike upon the first available opportunity, she offered him re-engagement on the usual terms. The joiner, who had been in receipt of free and even easy education, in reply hopped that Miss Tod was quite well, and that Mrs. Tod's roomattics was not giving her so much trubble as it did last yere. He would do Miss Tod's—might he even say his derest Kate's?—bidding with plesher. He always thot that Cocks was a badd lot, and it

had grieved him to the hart to think of such a sweet screecher becoming a badd lot's wife. Luking forward to having many years of married hapiness with his onely Kate, he remaned her devoted Tammaa. Almost the only person who had not threatened the life of Robin Cox was the Whitechapel Fiend. This singular circumstance led to an animated controversy on the question whether this omission did not justify the belief that Robin Cox was himself the Whitechapel Fiend. There was a symposium on the subject in the *Twentieth Century*; the views of Kate Tod were secured by the *Newest Review*; the pros and cons were all set forth in *The Review of the Review of Reviews*; Cardinal Vaughan took a bet with Mr. Plimsoll; and a Special Commission, appointed after years of debate by Parliament, would have investigated the mystery (which included the curious fact that no cheque-book was found in 1719 Bowling Road), *but for an extraordinary incident which revolutionised public sentiment on this subject, and of which more anon.*

CHAPTER III.

After five years, which were consumed during the intervals between Irish legislation in passing a special Act of Parliament for dealing with the case of Robin

Cox, the seventeen persons who were found in his room on the day when P. Q. heard the Wagnerian chorus of "murder" were placed on trial. By this time the evidence of accused persons had come to be accepted in criminal cases—and, indeed, practically to the exclusion of all other evidence. Each of the seventeen swore that his (or her) object in being in Robin Cox's room on the day in question was to murder Robin Cox. Each admitted that he (or she) stabbed Robin Cox—indeed, his body was a mass of stabs when P. Q. found it, though, rather curiously, not a drop of blood had flowed from any of the wounds. But each stoutly swore that Robin Cox was lying stark dead when he (or she) stabbed the body. Prosecuting counsel, judge, and jury were, of course, far from questioning the veracity of the accused persons, but they regarded the last declaration as a hallucination due to natural excitement. A verdict of "justifiable homicide" was returned against the whole seventeen. By this time justifiable homicide had come to be ranked among first-class misdemeanours, for which the maximum punishment was three months of the life popularly known as that of a fighting cock. The three months were divided into seventeen portions; each of the condemned, therefore, had all too short a time in the

fashionable Marquis Street gaol. The only person who was unaffectedly glad to leave this delightfully retired spot was Kate Tod. Since she had become a much be-photographed celebrity she had received a score of offers of marriage, her admirers including an American billionaire, a Hebraic banker, an English Earl, and a Scottish Duke. She accepted the Duke, because they saw eye to eye—they were the only folks that did—on Scottish Home Rule, and he had asked her not to marry him, but to “buckle tae.” The joiner, who had been utilising his enforced leisure by improving his mind, and had in particular qualified for a leaving certificate, resolved to put up with Kate Tod’s mother. Exclaiming “*Filia pulchra mater pulchrior!*” he rushed into Mrs. Tod’s roomat-ticky arms, and remained there. The other fifteen homicides were secured by the Barnum of the period, and lived happy ever afterwards as curiosities.

CHAPTER IV.

Six years passed, and Detective M’Clewer had not appeared at his bureau. On the day when he made his final report to the Home Office on the case of Robin Cox, he applied for a six years’ holiday, which, being quite a bagatelle of a request in that way, was granted at once. He had left orders with


his chief assistant that, in the event of his not turning up at the end of his little vacation, the room marked "private" should be opened. There all needful instructions would be found. The day came, but not the man; the room marked "private" was opened; and there on the centre of the floor lay the body of Detective-in-Chief M'Clewer in the same position as that in which Robin Cox had been found, and, like it, covered with stabs. On the writing-table lay a written explanation of the great Cox Mystery in nineteen languages. Briefly, it came to this. Neither M'Clewer nor Cox was, strictly speaking, dead. They had only disappeared. They were the opposing spirits of good and evil, of night and day. They stalked the world together, and left it together. Sometimes they fought their eternal duel as Aristotelian and Platonist, sometimes as Lancastrian and Yorkist, sometimes as Roundhead and Cavalier, sometimes as Box and Cox. Latterly their opposing rôles had been criminal and detective. Their duty was, after acting and counter-acting in one country for a period, to go off together. Cox, however, had not been playing fair—he never did. He had, by mesmerising, hypnotising, and other devices, willy-nillyed the seventeen people whom he had wronged into his room, hoping by shamming death to enjoy a few years more of the life of a

bogus riveter, which he rather liked. But M'Clewer had proved too much for Cox. In the forty-two seconds in which he was alone with the body in his bureau, he had administered first the *elixir vitæ* and then a disappearing powder. Having finished his report to the Home Office, he took a second disappearing powder himself. But by not taking his departure at precisely the same moment as Cox, he had done that unworthy & slight injury. So it was permissible for the spirit of Cox to cover M'Clewer's body with stabs similar to those ineffectual ones made in 1719 Bowling Road. This had been done. He would not say when, or in what guise, Robin Cox would re-appear. It might be taken for granted; however, that at the same moment he, too, would re-appear. So the Great Human Sleuthhound bade the General Public good-bye. By this time Spiritualism was recognised as the first of sciences; the learned societies and the Home Office accepted Detective-in-Chief M'Clewer's explanations as satisfactory; and the Cox Commission was sent about other business.

THE CONDUCT OF LIFE BY CATCHWORDS.

I HAVE just returned from a year's tour of the leading golf courses in the world, including Alexandra Park, Pau, Bridge of Weir, Biarritz, Lenzie, Westward Ho, St. Andrews, Hoylake, Sandwich, Calcutta, and Troon. I took this tour for two reasons,—because I wished to qualify for the open championship, and because there is a boom in golf, as there was some time ago in nitrate fields and brewery shares. I was in the company of one of the best amateur players in Great Britain, and my trip was therefore of the most enjoyable character. Yet I do not expect to wrest the championship from its present holder, although, of course, I mean to do my very best. I did not even learn much golf. On the contrary, I unlearned nearly all I had taught myself, for in golf, as in everything else, I believe as thoroughly in self-education as Hugh Miller and Samuel Smiles. I tried in succession to acquire the St. Andrews swing, which suits the heaven-born golfer only—the man whose body

bends as if it were wondering and singing, "What are the wild waves saying?"—the Laidlay jerk, which, like a plain woman with a warm heart and £10,000, is better than it is bonny; and Sayers's Address to his Ball, which is quite as long and effective as Bruce's Address to his Army, and graciously allows of ten minutes for refreshment per hole. I even took the Badminton Library Manual on Golf to every course with me, and also a black board to which I had transferred all Mr. Horace Hutchinson's interesting, instructive, and easily remembered diagrams. I spread them both out before me at the proper place every time I hit—or missed. All to no purpose, however. Then I received loads of instructions from my friend and adviser. But, as is the case with most other instructors and instructions, I more or less unconsciously rebelled against them. Thus when I was advised "Don't press," I of course pressed ferociously, and sent my ball about five feet. Similarly when, in front of a yawning bunker, I was told in a sympathetic, kindly way by my mentor, "Just imagine there's nothing in front of you, and you'll go over it as easily as winking," I interpreted his "winking" as "sinking," and plunged full fathom five into the sand. After a time I began to speculate as to what accounted for



my friend's own success—his steady drives, his sure approaches, his doing everything by holes and not by halves. I wondered if he had written on his cuffs, "Slow back—keep your eye on the ball." I stole into his room one night when he was asleep and looked at his cuffs, but found them as spotless as his own laundress could wish. I occasionally tried "Slow back—keep your eye on the ball" myself; but, somehow or other, the phrase brought into my mind the Cretans of old, who were "always liars," &c., and so I foozled as the Cretans have done all through their history. Yet I saw him muttering something to himself each time he aimed at the ball. Could it be "Mesopotamia," or "Machrihanish," or "John Ball, Junior"—which makes the utterer drive at least as well as Harold Hilton—or anything equally provocative of good play? No; I listened attentively, but nothing of the kind came to my hearing. I then bethought myself of the fashionable device for getting a man to reveal himself. So I hypnotised him in a jiffy and the whole truth came out. In a trance he grasped his walking stick. I said to him, "Speak up like a man." He spoke down like a woman. Gazing earnestly at a mark in the carpet, he swung the stick deliberately back after the manner approved of by my authority Horace,

humming sweetly to himself "When ye gang awa'." Here the club reached the end of its outward bound journey, and my friend added "Jamie" by way of rest. Then down it came with irresistible strength, but with nothing approaching to violence or even strenuosity, to the music of "Far across the sea—ah!" Here the imaginary ball was taken powerfully by the waist, so to speak, and, under cover of a kindly, yet triumphant, "laddie," was whirled two hundred yards over bunker and burn to that soft sward of the golfer's fancy, where alone in all the wide world, except perhaps in party politics, are lies ever good. I had discovered my friend's secret, and turned it to his disadvantage the very next day. Keeping my face as far away from him as possible when I addressed myself to the ball, I hummed the enchanted music, and drove fifty yards farther than I was wont. "Strange," said my friend, "that you should be playing better to-day, while I am playing worse. I feel as if I had lost something." He is right. The virtue of his play has gone out of him, and, to some extent at any rate, gone into me. I have now nearly as good a chance of the championship as he has. If only I could find out what it is that Hilton hums as he plies his mashie!

I mention golf in this connection, however, mainly because golf is, with the possible exception of money-making, the chief business in the world nowadays,—mankind being properly divisible into two classes, those who make money that they may play golf, and those who play golf that they may make money. But in almost the whole of life one may, if he chooses, be cushioned by, or embedded in, refrains and catchwords. Every transaction sets itself to some popular melody, at least to him who has an ear for music and a book of the songs of the period. Thus the shuttle has a music—the blank verse of Browning done into cater-waulings—as indubitable, if not quite as exhilarating, as the music of the golf-spheres. This the wise wife of a poor weaver of Fife discovered, and by no means to her detriment. His earnings were small, and, not because she was cruel but because she believed in simple proportion, she gave him half a bannock and half a herring by way of daily sustenance. One day in an idle and musing moment she listened to the music of the loom. It came to her ears distinctly and full mournfully and slow—

Half a bannock—half a herrn !

A bright thought struck her. She doubled her

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husband's allowance, and listened once more. Now the shuttle discoursed more cheerfully,

A haill bannock, a haill herrn !

A third experiment resulted in the inspiring rattle of

A bannock an' a half, a herrn an' a half !

And the old legend tells me that the worthy couple lived happily ever afterwards, and throve and saved to the tune of

Twa bannocks, twa herrn !

Twa bannocks, twa herrn !

As a matter of fact we all live on refrains, or—if we have no musical ear—on phrases. Take, for example, the good folks whose souls are in politics. Phrases are their meat and their drink. Watch a man with a vacant stare and a dreamy eye long enough, and you may see his lips move involuntarily, like those of a cat watching sparrows out of a window. He is saying to himself, "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality." I can tell at a glance the official Gladstonian, who never opens his lips but out there flees either "Justice to Ireland," "One man one vote," or "The Newcastle Programme." I know in a moment the curl of the lip that means "the populace" and the fall of the jaw that should be interpreted "the people." Yond Cassius, with his

lean and hungry look and his matted beard, is muttering "the masses" as Tappertit visions pass before his eyes, while the fat and sleek-headed man whom he is jostling falls to sleep every night on "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform." It is thus all throughout life. No doubt Dickens was quite accurate when he made old Joe Willet, when dying, declare that he was going to the Salvanners; and Marryatt did not exaggerate when he made Peter Simple's friend, the captain, aver with his latest breath that he had known men live with the death rattle in their throats for six weeks. The ruling phrase, like the ruling passion, is strong in death. "It will be all the same a hundred years hence"—how many a man has been sustained for years and years of struggle by this totally inaccurate, and at the best but negatively comforting phrase? "Hope springs eternal in the human breast"—have not hundreds received stimulus not only from the idea, but from the words? If the late Charles Mackay deserves a monument for nothing else, he deserves it for having taught so many to say, and to act on the saying, "Cheer, boys, cheer, no more of idle sorrow." Women, I admit, are not so amenable to phrases or refrains as men, but still they can be touched, and to purpose. A friend of mine

tells me that when he is slightly tired he flops down heavily into his armchair on coming from town, and says, "I do believe I am going down the hill at last, Jane." He is sure to be rewarded and refreshed with a cup of tea, and with the reassuring information that he is talking nonsense, and that he looks as young as ever—and "Where shall we go this summer?" But if he sinks down weary and melancholy into his seat, and hums dolefully, "I'm wearin' awa', Jean," he fares much better. Jane's eyes fill with tears, she embraces him, gives him a glass—perhaps two—of his favourite port, and tells him that he must take a little rest as he has been working far too hard of late. Should not the doctor be sent for at once? In any case he must go off from Saturday to Monday somewhere.

There is no doubt, therefore, as to the extraordinary influence exercised by catchwords and refrains on the conduct of life. But I think it is rather unsafe in these busy days to trust to memory for them. They should be so placed that one could see them easily whenever and wherever they are needed. The golfer puts "Slow back—keep your eye on the ball" on his cuffs. Why should not other people follow the golfer's plan, and have placed on their cuffs such instructions as "*Festina Lente*," "Never

look a gift horse in the mouth," and "A stitch in time saves nine"? I have myself fallen upon an excellent plan of this sort to ensure that I shall always dine wisely and never too well. Deep down in the interior of my left-hand cuff I have written, in imperishable ink, my maxim of moderation. It used to be "Look not upon the wine when it is red." This did not work well, however. It seemed to stand a double interpretation—to mean, do not look at all on claret and burgundy, but look a great deal on champagne and still hock. In fact, I discovered that it encouraged what Mr. Goschen terms a rush on alcohol. In place of this maxim I have substituted, "Know, prudent, cautious self-control is wisdom's root." This is an admirable moral brake, and I say without the slightest hesitation that whoever mutters these words in advance slowly every time he puts his glass to his lips will never take too much. Then there is the band by which one hangs up his coat. Why should I always be confronted by the announcement on it that I have been a purchaser of "M'Shoddy's thirty-shilling suit"? Why not be encouraged rather to

Gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justified by honour?

But I should recommend collars as a perfect treasure-

house of possibilities in the way of sensible and succinct instruction. Why give them up to such empty titles as "The Dæle," "The Home Rule," or "The Belgravian"? Why not devote these magnificent and imperfectly utilized hoardings to such excellent maxims as "A soft answer turneth away wrath," "Love all, but be familiar with none," and "Keek through ev'ry ither man wif secret sly inspection"? Indeed, I am intending to start a company which may enable folks to carry all their moral *impedimenta* on their persons without any strain on the muscles or even on the conscience. I had better say nothing more till my prospectuses are ready.

JUSTIFIABLE REMOVALS.

I HAVE removed but two people in my time. This is a small allowance in these days of Rider Haggard, the Mala Vita, women with scores of husbands, husbands with scores of wives, heaps upon heaps of slain, garments rolled in blood, and sackfuls of grinning skulls. But I have no compunction in regard to either of my removals. Full fathom five Bob Dunshunner lies. Of his bones coral would now be making, if the industrious creature which is playing the mischief with the Malthusian theory by making new continents had ever seen the necessity for migrating to Loch Short. But as for Bob's disappearance there, he brought it on himself. Before I threw him into the loch that afternoon, as we paced the deck of the "Tommiestowel," holding our noses as we discussed pollution in the full-dress manner of members of Parliament, he had given me great provocation. He had insisted on breaking away from pollution to golf, influenza, and leaving certificates—

the three stupid subjects which he knows I hold in special abhorrence. But he precipitated matters, and finally himself, by seeking to insult me in my favourite character of reformer of Scottish pronunciation. In season, and perhaps out of it, I insist on "Menzees" as opposed to "Meengia." When I meet my old and valued friend the Gladstonian Whip, I, of course, slap him on the back, and say, "How goes it, Marjoribanks (not 'Marshbanks'), my boy?" Above all things I insist on "Milngavie" superseding the distinctly local and detestably vulgar "Millguy." That afternoon, after lunch, as we walked the deck, Milngavie was a favourite subject of discussion. When we get an underground railway, or a subway, or something of that sort, which will, in a proper business fashion, include Milngavie within the boundaries of the greatest of all Glasgows, I intend to set up my vine and fig-tree there. I see already where my desirable villa residence will stand. I have planned its porch. I even now picture the seat where I'll smoke the pipe of peace. Well, having taken a liking for the place, I naturally wish to add to its gentility by having its name properly pronounced. Somehow I fancied—like a witness in a baccarat trial—that Bob would help me. And so I kept on talking about the development of Milngavie and the great

future that is in store for it. In doing so I emphasised the name—as it should be pronounced. Now, Bob, in an open and above-board manly way, might have said to me, “I see, James, old friend, what you are driving at, but you will never succeed. ‘Millguy’ it has been from the beginning of time, and ‘Millguy’ it will be to the end of its chapter.” But instead of taking this course—the only gentlemanly one, in my opinion—he kept checkmating me by quietly following up my aristocratic pronunciation of the place with his own plebeian one. Thus, when I said, “I fancy I should like my bones to be laid in Milngavie, in a cemetery with a nice southerly exposure,” he replied, “Well, the Millguy people hardly die at all, James. You see, they never take the influenza. That is the reason they give the Department so little trouble about leaving certificates. Ha! ha!” (He actually said “Haw! haw!” to be in keeping with “Millguy,” I suppose.) And so things went on till—as is usual with things—they reached the climax of exasperation. Bob volunteered the remark, “I suppose they’ll be laying out a golf course at Millguy one of these days.” The blood mounted to my head. I looked round. Nobody was looking. In fact, everybody was down below. I seized Bob in the usual manner, and hoisted him over my head and over

the deck of the "Tommiestowel." "I'll Millguy you," I muttered, as, describing the usual parabola or parallax, Bob rose in air. "Dead stimie, I think!" I could not help exclaiming as he gracefully descended. Then I remembered our old friendship, and whispered hoarsely, "For any sake, Bob, hold your nose!" But it was too late. Bob Dunshunner had disappeared for ever in the waters of Loch Short. I hope he did not feel its pollution too much as he passed to his richly merited doom. With all his faults, he was a man of a genuinely sensitive organisation.

My second removal, which took place only yesterday, is, if possible, even more justifiable than the first. Bob Dunshunner was but a man, and, with his everlasting "Millguy," only sinned against me personally in my capacity as reformer of Scottish pronunciation. Augustus Greetdaily, whom I removed last night with an overdose of chloral—so his removal was quite an euthanasia—because he said "Such a pity" once too often, is in his way a Type. By removing a man you only benefit yourself. By removing a Type you benefit your species. Of course I use the word Type in its popular significance as an Extreme Case. Strictly and scientifically speaking, the "such a pity" Type to which Augustus Greetdaily belonged before his removal is not exhausted by his death. I fear,

indeed, it is inexhaustible, although a vast deal of good would be done if everybody who is troubled with an acquaintance that is perpetually saying, "Such a pity," or "What a pity," or "It's a pity," or "I'm so sorry," or always appears in limp intellectual "weepers," would but follow my example. Of course these tiresome Balance-of-Nature people, who are "so careful of the Type" that they won't allow their cats to kill all their rats, but insist on preserving one or two monsters so as to give the Sanitary Inspectors something to do, will interfere, and say, "You must not extirpate the *Misericordia* order lest a worse evil befall you." But they should not have too much attention paid them; indeed, I am not quite sure but that it is this Type which should be removed next. In any case, I have done quite right in making an example of Greetdaily. My objection to him—an objection which has only been removed by his removal—was that he had no sense of proportion in his pity. No matter what the particular misfortune to lament might be—the loss of your wife, or the loss of her second cousin from "Amurrika" who talked like Macaulay and was as avaricious of "attention" as a professional beauty, the fall of an Empire or of a carafe, the disappearance of a life's savings or

the postponement of an afternoon's bowling—he had the same funereal formula to express in the second-mourning tone. This was his style—and the style of his Type:—

“Greetdaily, I’ve just lost my dearest and oldest friend on earth.”

“Oh, I am so sorry!”

“Greetdaily, I lost the 3.7 train from Queen Street yesterday afternoon!”

“Oh, I am so sorry.”


“Greetdaily, that scoundrel of a partner of mine has bolted to America with every penny, not only of his, but of mine that was in the business.”

“What a pity!”

“Greetdaily, my youngest daughter got just a trifle wet when she was playing lawn tennis the other day at your place.”

“Such a pity!”

This, “I am so sorry,” indeed, became so completely a second nature with him that he fell into a trap I laid for him. His wife's stepmother had died. She had lived in his house for ten years. She had a tongue like a cross-cut saw and a temper like Thackeray's Campaigner. She was hated by everybody. She left all her money—a tidy trifle of £30,000—to her stepdaughter's children. When I




saw Mrs. Briarly's death in the papers I wrote Greetdaily—I was away on a fishing excursion at the time—what I intended to be such a caricature of his habitual flabby pity and humid insincerity as should shame him out of both for all time to come. “My dear Greetdaily, I have just seen the announcement of the death of poor dear Mrs. Briarly. I am so sorry! Cut off, too, at such an early age as eighty-five! What a pity! I can realise the blank her loss will create in the lives of Mrs. Greetdaily and the children. I am afraid that the appalling nature of this blow—its stun and suddenness—must have completely prostrated you, and that I need not look for you to-morrow at our Hook and Fly Club here, as we had arranged, by the 4.57 train. What a pity! Do bear up, my dear Greetdaily! When this wound has healed, and you can look back on the dear departed with the far-off interest of years, you will admit that this has been for the best. Give my regards and sympathy to Mrs. Greetdaily, and tell her I am so sorry!—Sincerely yours, James Jobson.” Little did I know at the time I wrote how deeply Greetdaily's humbug had entered into his soul. But I did know three days later, when I received this letter written on paper the mourning border of which was about a foot deep:—“My dear Jobson,—

Pardon my delay in answering the letter, written with characteristic depth of feeling and delicacy of sentiment, in which you said you were so sorry to hear of the irreparable loss Mrs. Greetdaily and myself have sustained in the death of Mrs. Briarly. The truth is that I have had no heart to write to anyone, and, as I hurriedly scrawl these few lines to you now, my eyes are blinded with tears. What a pity it is, my dear Jobson, that this truly noble woman has left us at so early an age! As yet Mrs. Greetdaily and myself are unable to realise the fact that she is no longer in the land of living stepmothers. The house will not seem the same when I come from the Club if I do not, as I gently open the door with my latchkey, hear a voice, as from higher latitudes, call down to Mrs. Greetdaily, sitting patiently in the dining-room, 'There is Augustus *at last*, Araminta. Good night, my poor child.' I cannot reproduce the wealth of gentle reproach that was conveyed in the intonation of 'at last.' Why, oh why, did I ever join the Club, or, having joined it, why did I ever drop in of an evening? I am so sorry now. I know, my dear Jobson, how much you revered—I may even say loved—Mrs. Briarly. You will not, therefore, think me garrulous if I relate to you a little incident

which occurred shortly after her final and fatal attack of illness. I had just come from a delightful walk from Strathbungo, *via* the Club, and, on hearing the sad news, rushed into her room without doffing the new pale lavender tweed suit which I had worn that day for the first time. Mrs. Greetdaily was with her. When Mrs. Briarly saw me she muttered, 'What a pity!' Mrs. Greetdaily's explanation of this ejaculation differs slightly from mine. It seems that, when Mrs. Briarly realised how serious her condition was, she expressed a wish to see the solicitor who had made her last will and was in possession of it. Mrs. Greetdaily's impression is that her stepmother wished to alter the will so as to let her other sister Zephyrina benefit—doubtless to some slight extent—by her very considerable means. The solicitor was, however, in London, busy with the new Boundaries Bill, the chief object of which is to annex Edinburgh to Glasgow, and twenty-four hours must elapse before he could appear on the scene. This intelligence had been conveyed to Mrs. Briarly immediately before I came in, and—such is Mrs. Greetdaily's belief—the exclamation 'What a pity!' expressed her disappointment at the non-appearance of the solicitor in good time. I knew better; I have not listened for all

these years to that excellent woman's voice, raised daily for reproof, for correction, for instruction in domestic righteousness. I know the true meaning of her 'What a pity!' When Mrs. Briarly glanced at me she at once realised the fact that after her decease it would be impossible for me to wear my pale lavender tweed suit for some time. Indeed, my grief for her loss would be such that it would be several years before I could wear a tweed suit again, and then probably pale lavender would not be in fashion. Could refinement of thoughtfulness go further than this, my dear Jobson? But I cannot write more, although it would take volumes to do justice to this noble woman, whose character Mrs. Greetdaily and myself are only now learning to thoroughly appreciate. I must therefore close—I am so sorry—with recording my thanks to you for the wealth of sympathy which you have so cordially and so lavishly showered upon me, and which may, in the long run, help me to recover from this overwhelming blow. Believe me, my dear Jobson, yours sorrowfully, yet hopefully—Augustus Greetdaily."


It was after receiving this letter that the duty of removing Greetdaily "became clear to me"—if I may be allowed to plagiarise the favourite formula



of the second-sighted people of our time, who, by the way, are in many respects extremely short-sighted. I waited, indeed, for a few days to ascertain the exact position of Greetdaily's pecuniary affairs. I learned to my satisfaction that Mrs. Briarly had behaved as generously to his family as had been generally expected, and perhaps even more than she had ultimately intended. Should "anything come to Greetdaily," his wife and children would be all right. If she must be made a widow, the work of removal ought to be done while she was still comparatively young, and positively, if not superlatively, charming. She went into such lovely mourning that I could have married her myself, only that unfortunately I have no powerful reason for removing Mrs. Jobson. Greetdaily never looked better than when he reappeared from the seclusion into which he plunged after the death of Mrs. Briarly. He looked happy; he looked relieved; he looked positively well-to-do. And yet he was, if possible, fuller than before of his usual expressions of regret. I asked him to a quiet dinner with one or two friends at the Club. The answer was, "I am so sorry—but really I can't—the death of poor Mrs. Briarly, you know!" I suggested that he should come down to our house at the coast. "What

a pity!" he exclaimed, "but I cannot come. I should be the worst of company. You see, in the midst of your gaiety, thoughts of the dear departed would suddenly flood my eyes with tears." At last he declared, without any compunction, that he was suffering from insomnia, and all because he could not get Mrs. Briarly out of his mind. That settled his fate. I made certain that he should never suffer from insomnia again.

The removal of Greetdaily was, I admit, an exceedingly strong step to take. But so far as I can see it was practically inevitable. For Greetdaily had become a nuisance, and the removal of nuisances is most decidedly in the interest of the public. Besides, I meant it as a warning, and as a warning I trust it will be taken. It is high time that there was an end to the feeble and ineffectual pity which is expressed by the popular phrases "I am so sorry," and "What a pity," and "It's a great pity," and "Such a pity," and which is less helpful and more galling than no compassion at all. This sentiment is most fittingly, in the sense of most usefully, expressed by genuine service and good practical advice. Thus the best answer to "I've just lost my last hundred pounds" is not "I am so sorry," but "That's bad; but if fifty pounds are of any



help to you at the present moment they are very much at your service." Then, again, the answer to "I lost the 4.7 train yesterday afternoon at Queen Street" should be, not "What a pity! Your dinner must have been cold?" but "Served you right! Why did you not give yourself a little more time to catch the train in, or why did you not take the car?" Finally, the answer to "I am losing my housekeeper immediately; my sister is going out to New Zealand to be married," should be, not the flaccid "Such a pity! How helpless you will feel!" but a hearty slap on the back, followed by "The sooner you get married, old fellow, the better. I know the very woman to suit you, and I think you know her too."

There are, of course, losses so great, griefs so poignant and sacred, that sympathy can only take the form of subjective or moral help. That, however, is the best reason why a resolute effort ought to be made to prevent the further debasement of the coinage of sympathy. The coinage of love is also debased—a lapdog and a bonnet are treated to the same terms of endearment as a lover. But love can afford this sort of outrage; grief cannot.

A MODERN SCOTTISH TRAGEDY.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT the end of June, 1892, the minds of the burghers of St. Serf's-by-the-Sea were agitated in about equal measure by three approaching events—the coming of a new tenant to the Castle, the hearing of the “short leet” candidates for the first charge in the Parish Church, and a General Election which was apparently to decide whether Scotland, voting under Household Suffrage, had accepted the ultra-democratic or Glasgow-cum-Perth programme. The first had the charm of absolute mystery. Nothing was known of the man who had taken a lease of the Castle except that he bore the commonplace aristocratic name of Vernon, and that he was an English barrister who had a large and lucrative practice. The issue of the General Election, and of the contest in the Comatose District of Burghs to which St. Serf's belonged, was, of

course, equally uncertain. But here, as in most mundane concerns, hope came to the rescue of fact.

It was Sunday afternoon, and the burghers of St. Serf's, who were returning from service in the Parish Church with their wives and children, were discussing these three important subjects in an easy, discursive fashion. Man is born in Scotland not only to mourn and to "wear murnins," but to play his part as a member of a debating society. Further, as the burgher-villagers of St. Serf's were fully occupied on week days—even of a Saturday night when they were idle they considered it a duty to drink to the prosperity of their one public-house in its best parlour—the meetings of their debating society could be held on these afternoons only, and could be conducted in Aristotelian, not Socratic, fashion. A watchful hearer, or overhearer, might pick up bits of conversation by listening to the different sets of peripatetics discussing different subjects, and, as Mr. Andrew Lang would say, might make a haggis out of them.

"I'm thinkin', Tammas, that that man—Vernon, is't ye ca' him?—will fin' St. Serf's a maist awfu' contrast to London, whaur he's comin' frae. Though I've lived in St. Serf's a' my days, I maun say that it's the maist deed-an'-alive place in a' Creation."

"Na, na, Mrs. Nisbet, I'll no gi'e my vote for that saft-speakin' laud frae Slackness. He minces his words faur owre muckle, an' I misdoot ony man that has nae hair on his face. Ye can ay tell a man's charikter frae his whusker. If it sits quiet on the side of his cheek, an' yet 'looks nate, then you may tak' my word for't that he's baith modest an' self-respeckin'. If it staunds oot as if to say, 'Look here, isna this a whusker for ye?' then I ken him fine for a man that the Lord has sent a mair than ornar' lot o' conceit tea. But if a man has nae whusker that yet has the foundations o' ane, it means, no that he has nae charikter, but that he disna mean onybody to fin' it oot. I like a man that's open an' abuve boord."

"Ah, weel, Maister Tamson, there's mebbe a gude deal in what ye say. He's a' soun', at ony rate, aboot the wrangs o' Ireland, an' Anti-Vaccination, and the Leeberashun o' the Kirk frae State Control."

Thus the good people of St. Serf's prattled all the way homeward till they had nothing else to gossip about, and they took tea and buttered toast, and coughed a good deal as they took these things, for, like most good, mild people, they were always colded more or less, and coughing reached a climax on

Sunday. Then, after tea and toast, and more coughs, some of them settled down to "good books," while others, sound Erastians though they were, went to hear the Free Church minister, who, unlike his rival of the Establishment, preached every Sabbath night. And having criticised him as he ought to be criticised, they returned to porridge and coughs and meditation, and they all went to sleep at ten o'clock. Little they thought! How, indeed, could they think?

CHAPTER II.


It is exactly four months later, and all the possibilities mentioned in the last chapter have become certainties. Mr. Vernon has appeared at and taken possession of the Castle. He is just the sort of man he was generally expected to be—strong, square, energetic, with the typically clean-shaven face which is suggestive of the First and only Napoleon, and which seems to invite physiognomists to express an opinion on it and find sensibility here, strength of will there, and a secret, suppressed, yet all-dominating passion somewhere else. Mr. Vernon's family has come with him. It consists of Mrs. Vernon, who, pale, washed-out, depressed, more or less of an invalid, can

be seen at a glance to be the ruins of a superb Devonshire woman; of a son of twenty-three, who is endeavouring to follow in his father's footsteps at the Bar, and knows all about actresses, singers, restaurants and qualities of tobacco; a daughter of nineteen—a thin, anæmic slip of a girl—and three young children with the familiar names of Basil, Clytemnestra, and Nausicaa. These three children have a governess, who, being one of the governesses of the Period, is the chief personage at the Castle. She is French, of course; at least, she is known as Mademoiselle Wye. She has a magnificent figure, large lustrous eyes, and bewitching, yet imperious, manners. She knows to perfection the art of evening-dressing on no money to speak of, of flirtation, of handkerchief-dropping, of palpitating at the piano. Her play suggests Rubinstein or the Marseillaise in action; her singing is a beaker full of the warm South. She knows and speaks with equal ease twenty languages, including French, German, Chinese, Amurrican, English, and Edinburgh Doric. She has subjugated, not only the children who constitute her immediate charge, but every male at the Castle, including a labourer as to whose "sair heid" she makes frequent and special inquiries. She had made a complete conquest of Vernon himself. After she had been at the Castle a week he showed no

attention to his invalid wife and grown-up youngsters, but when his smaller children and their governess went out for a walk he was sure to be by their side. The good but mildly inquisitive folks of St. Serf's observed what was passing. All said, "If Mrs. Vernon dees, her man wull no hae to gang faur for a second wifa." Mrs. Vernon's maid, who hated Mademoiselle Wye, told her mistress, when engaged in the work of hair-dressing of a night, and by way of soothing syrup to that poor lady's feelings, that Mr. Vernon was in the habit of putting the governess's light summer feather boa round her when she went out of an afternoon, of buttoning her gloves, and of turning over her music for her when she sat at the piano. Mrs. Vernon, according to the report of the maid, who looked upon her mistress as a spiritless creature, merely sighed, sobbed, and said, "He might have waited till I was gone."

Mr. Macgregor-Flagpole had been returned for the Comatose Burghs by a large majority on the Democratic-Anarchist-Socialistic ticket. It was a nice little programme—Mr. Macgregor-Flagpole's. It included the Abolition of the House of Lords *instantly*, the Abolition of the Monarchy after a period of ten years considerably given to the Reigning Family to "clear out," the Nationalisation of Everything, and the Payment to Everybody of £200 a-year.

The vacancy in the Parish Church of St. Serf's had been filled up. The "saft-speakin'," whiskerless "laud" had not been chosen by the congregation, but a full-bearded, spectacled Boanerges, who had been a missionary in various countries, and who had captured St. Serf's by a startling sermon on Paul's shipwreck, which he illustrated by experiences of his own. He was a bachelor. That was not, however, regarded as an unmixed misfortune in St. Serf's, whose inhabitants looked forward to being witnesses of a minister's wooing, of which there had been no experience for generations. He had just installed himself in the manse, and had placed in it a grim-looking, silent housekeeper, who answered to the name of "Marget." He himself was the Rev. James F. Dobell. He had been elected rather hurriedly by the majority of the congregation, who were afraid that, if they did not act promptly, the partisans of the whiskerless "laud" would be able to steal a march upon them. It would seem that he had been out *in partibus infidelium* since he became a licentiate, and hence he had no home references. But his (lithographed) testimonials from the chairman of the Foreign Missions Committee and from a number of distinguished missionaries were excellent. He had been settled only as yet a single Sunday in St. Serf's. He had chosen for one of his




subjects on that day "The Strange Woman." Some members of the congregation affirmed that Mr. Dobell's discourse was directed against Mademoiselle Wye, who sat in the Castle pew with Mr. Vernon and the family. Others, however, affirmed that "the strange woman" was allegorical, and meant Pantheism or Buddhism or Agnosticism or Theosophy, or some other of the new creeds of the time. This dispute has never been decided. The gossips also declared that, not altogether unnaturally perhaps, Mr. Dobell occasionally spoke with what seemed a foreign accent, and that then Mademoiselle Wye glanced at him with a curious intentness.

CHAPTER III.

It was the night before Christmas, and Mr. Vernon was entertaining a select party to dinner at the Castle. It included a few of the neighbouring lairds and their wives. The lairds had ascertained that the new lessee of the Castle was all he represented himself to be, that he belonged to a good branch of the Vernons—though not the Harcourt Vernons—and that his professional reputation was testified to by the fact that he had "taken silk." The ladies having ascertained that "taken silk" meant nothing specially

larcenous, left their own and their husbands' cards at the Castle. Their politenesses were returned, and rewarded with an invitation to dinner, which was unhesitatingly accepted. Mr. and Mrs. Macgregor-Flagpole were of the party. Mr. Vernon was a warm supporter of the various causes that Mr. Flagpole advocated. He was ready to abolish everything except his own more than respectable fortune—and "except Mademoiselle Wye," kindly added the ladies. Mr. Flagpole, with his wife, was spending Christmas and New Year in the house of his brother-revolutionist and supporter. The Rev. James F. Dobell was also present. Mr. Vernon had ascertained that, as tenant of the Castle, he had a right to occupy the front row in one of the galleries in St. Serf's Parish Church. Accustomed to English ways, he thought that to ask the parish minister to dinner was the correct thing to do, more especially as that minister was a bachelor. Finally, Mademoiselle Wye was there. The ladies felt deeply insulted, but they were unable to do or say anything beyond sympathising with poor Mrs. Vernon, who had risen from her invalid's couch to take her proper place at the table. But Mademoiselle Wye, who was a masterful woman at any time, seemed especially commanding and Semiramidal that night in a very handsome dress of black satin, which did the




amplest justice to her fine figure, and which, the ladies said to each other in their amiable way, could not have been "bought out of her wages."

There is nothing so commonplace as an ordinary first-class dinner, and that at the Castle on this particular evening was no exception to the regular rule. The dishes, wines, liqueurs, fruits, were precisely what they might have been expected to be. There was nothing notable in connection with the formality of taking in to dinner, except that the Rev. Mr. Dobell took in Mademoiselle Wye, and that they speedily got into talk, which they carried on in French.

Conversation was of the usual comprehensiveness in its range of subjects. Vernon looked absent-minded, although he did his part as a host well. He brightened up a little, however, when the talk turned on recent great "social scandal" trials in London. These were all to be eclipsed by a case in which he was to be professionally engaged about the beginning of the year, which was to involve fully a half of the British Peerage, and among the elements in which were to be baccarat, bigamy, burglary, and Brahmanism. The demand for seats in Court was altogether unprecedented. Among those who had signified their intention of being in

attendance were the Czar and the other Russian "Royalties" then on a visit to the Queen.

The gentlemen had joined the ladies in the drawing-room. Music was in process, and, as the most natural thing in the world, Mr. Vernon asked Mademoiselle Wye to sing a French *chanson*. She had just seated herself at the piano in obedience to this request, when a deep commanding voice startled the room with the words "Olga Petrolovitch!" On the instant Mademoiselle Wye rose to her full height, and turned round like a tigress at bay—to confront the Rev. James Dobell pointing a revolver at her head! "Paul Dobeloff!" she hissed out. With a fearful laugh he pulled off his hair, whiskers, and spectacles, and disclosed the well-known features—well known at all events to readers of modern novels—of the great Russian Chief of Police. The laugh was a strategic blunder. It gave Mademoiselle Wye time to produce another revolver from the pocket of her dress. A report—two reports rolled into one—rang out. Assailant and assailed fell down in the centre of the drawing-room, shot through the brain. Speechless, Vernon gazed at the bodies for a moment. He then rushed forward, stooped down, seized the still-smoking revolvers, placed them to his ears, and fell with a wailing cry.




Mrs. Vernon rose from the couch on which she had been reclining, staggered forward, and fell dead—literally heart-broken—on the body of her husband.

CHAPTER IV.

People who do mad or foolish things have a habit of leaving on their persons letters which "explain all—all." It is very considerate of them, and very convenient for the public. Fortunately, in a sense also unfortunately, this was the case with the three leading personages in the St. Serf's tragedy—fortunately, because that "tragic event," as the local papers styled it, was explained; unfortunately, because it was discovered to be one of those very ordinary episodes with which all modern novels are filled. The letter found on Mr. Vernon's body was, of course, to Mademoiselle Wye, and was to have been delivered to her on bidding her good-night had Mr. Vernon gone through this ceremony in the old-fashioned, and not in the modern style. In it, the great Q.C. told the governess of his mad passion for her, and asked her to flee with him. The letter found on Mademoiselle Wye discovered her to be Olga Petrolovitch, the great, surpassingly beautiful and enormously wealthy Nihilistic Jewess.

It was addressed to another member of the Sisterhood of Conspiracy, who was arrested forthwith and deported to Siberia. It told, among other things, how Olga was animated by one passion only—a desire to kill the Czar, and as many more of the detested Royal Family of Russia as she could fairly manage—how she had discovered all about the great scandal trial—how, ascertaining that Vernon was to be engaged in it, she had answered an advertisement for a governess—how, having called at his chambers, she had remorselessly used her personal charms to fascinate him into accepting her, and how she had subsequently strengthened her hold upon him. Her intention, when she had secured a place in the Court at Westminster at the same time as the Czar and his friends, was to empty the contents of her revolver among them, and then to get arrested comfortably. Towards the close of her letter she indicated a presentiment of danger; something in the voice of the preacher in St. Serf's had brought back old memories in a most unaccountable fashion. Dobell's—or Dobeloff's—letter was to the Minister of the Interior in St. Petersburg, and detailed his successful hunting down of the greatest and most dreaded of the Jewish Nihilistic enemies of the Czar. He had been, of course, in his youth an ardent lover



of Olga Petrolovitch, but she had thrown him and all personal feeling whatever over for her murderous mission. His love turned to hate, and he offered his services to the Detective Political Department of the Czar. Through one class of agents he traced Olga to St. Serf's. By means of another he secured the person of the real Rev. James F. Dobell, who was acting as a missionary in a part of Russia where the will of the Czar was the only law, and had him thrown temporarily into prison. Having seized the missionary's papers, Dobeloff made his way to St. Serf's, and, being an expert linguist, had no difficulty in securing the pastorate. He calculated that Olga would be put off, rather than on, the scent by the resemblance between his own name and that of the genuine missionary. He meant to kill her, as he had no legal authority for her arrest. Rather curiously, he had not calculated on Olga killing him. The ablest of calculators always forget something.

The good people of St. Serf's were rather disappointed when the true story of their tragedy came out. They are great novel-readers, and, after what they had read of, this seemed miserably tame. But they are not likely to have anything better for a time. The whiskerless "laud" now reigns in the Parish Church, and as his antecedents are known

to the smallest detail, even to the fact that his grandfather was a "damask" weaver and drank Alloa ale, there is not the slightest risk of his turning out anybody in particular. The Castle has been let to an Edinburgh W.S., who is old, fat, and bald, who sleeps after dinner, and is very much married and sister-in-lawed. There is no governess at the Castle. This is a blessing—and a blank.

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF SECOND CHILDHOOD.

WHENEVER you hear any grown-up, reasonably healthy, and presumably sane man preface a statement with "In my young days," or emit some such plagiarised sigh as "Oh, to be a child again!" you may with perfect safety set him down as either a bit of a rogue, or one of Carlyle's fools, or one of Christopher North's "buddies." For one thing, it is the feeblest egotism to babble of green fields till you are ninety at least; and even then it is only excusable if your brain has given way. Always, therefore, suspect any man on the right side of seventy who, except, of course, under the pressure put upon him by a census enumerator, says anything about 'his ever having been younger than he is now. He probably wishes you to believe that he is physically and intellectually weaker than he was, and intends in some subtle and mean fashion to take advantage of you. In nine cases out of ten, too, the person who expresses a

desire to be a child again does so out of vanity. He intends those who hear him to believe that he has seen a great deal of life, and that he is that wonderful—and just a trifle wicked—person, a man of the world. For, as a matter of fact, whoever really desires to be a child again can have his wish gratified—or as much of it as is good for others and even himself—at the expenditure of a little force of will. No doubt a forty-five-year-old cannot absolutely transform himself into a five-year-old, any more than beef can relapse into veal. Nor is any such transformation always desirable, even if it were possible. Good beef is, to say the least of it, quite as delectable as good veal; the developed beauty of eight-and-twenty, nay sometimes of eight-and-thirty, has a charm of its own equal to that of sweet but callow seventeen. You cannot turn back the hands of the clock. And when I say that it is the duty of a man to anticipate, and, by anticipating, to ward off the ravages of time, to take to Second Childhood before Second Childhood takes to him, I certainly do not recommend him to go in for dolls, rattles, measles, head-over-heels romps, mud-pies, and the sunshine and shower of the infantile temperament. All I mean is that he should endeavour to engraft on his own life whatever in childhood is likely to be of advantage to him by aiding in his rejuvenation.

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The glory of childhood to itself, and also its charm in the eyes of those who are spectators and admirers of its *abandon*, lie in the sense of freedom which it displays, and which proves contagious. To become a child for a second time, therefore, of one's free will, and not in obedience to the *force majeure* of weakness or creeping old age, we must above all things aim at securing not only amusement, but absolute absorption and freedom during that amusement. No doubt the poets are right in their ideals of amusements, as, indeed, they invariably are when they deal with the idealities of life and leave the practicalities alone. A lodge in some vast wilderness, a boundless contiguity of shade, the pleasure that is to be found in pathless woods—in these the poet no doubt renews his childhood. But then, the ordinary man has not the poet's power of enjoying absolute solitude, of revelling in it, of keeping no company but that of Arthur instead of Lancelot. Besides, he is in nine cases in ten a married man, and if he is to embark on a cruise in search of Second Childhood he must take his family with him. And here the great mass of humanity—at all events, the great mass of that humanity which can afford a holiday, and is worth £300 a-year and more—is found going the right way about the discovery of the delights of Second Child-

hood, so far, at all events, as such rectitude is compatible with gregariousness. The proper season for a profitable lapse into Second Childhood is spring. Everybody knows what in spring—and more particularly in the Easter recess—the fancy of Lord Tennyson's young man lightly turns to. It is of even greater, at least, of more immediate importance to consider whither the steps of experienced heads of families turn. They go for ten days or a fortnight to hydropathic establishments and the large hotels which, as regards most arrangements, are conducted on hydropathic principles. Their instinct guides them rightly. In hydropathics and hydropathic hotels alone can you find the science and the art of Second Childhood in their perfection. The strength of childhood lies in its irresponsibility, and the autocratic power which is associated with such irresponsibility. Now, on the hydropathic principle, people are relieved of all responsibility—at so much a week. You are, as it were, placed in a large, well-aired nursery, and there you are allowed to romp about at perfect freedom within stated limits. As in your first childhood, you must not be naughty but good, and obey your nurse for the time. You are a being that is to be kept alive by means of well-cooked meals, and whose sole business otherwise it is to play between these meals. No doubt

you are under the strictest discipline. You must rise at a certain hour ; it is the greatest of crimes to be late for a meal. But this, too, is part and parcel of a relapse into childhood. When you are in that condition you think yourself free and seem to be. But, as a matter of fact, you are only free to do what your nurse, parent, or guardian allows.

So far so good. A picnic, says Mr. Herbert Spencer, is a return to a state of nature—though, by the way, I have never met anyone who has seen the Philosopher of Bayswater disporting himself at a picnic, making himself agreeable, passing, not the Unknowable, but the teacakes, or asking a young lady who happened to be sitting on the same tree stump as himself whether she had been very gay the previous winter, and not whether she had concentrated her cellular tissue on the extraction of homogeneity out of the multiple and essentially cerebro-psychological heterogeneity of cosmic phenomena. Similarly a well-managed dip into hydropathy means an excursion into Second Childhood. But it must be thoroughly well managed ; the irresponsibility must be complete. To accomplish this result one thing is absolutely imperative. You must leave all your town interests—your “shop,” your church, your committee, your loves and your

hatreds, behind you. If you pass two old stagers talking earnestly in the corner of the drawing-room, and if you overhear something about "prices" or "losses" or "increase of stipend" or "selection of a new chairman," depend upon it they are not taking the best way to make the last stage of existence a specially long one. Again, if after breakfast you see the bald-headed man, with the stoop in his shoulders and the spectacles on his nose, waylaying the servant with the morning paper, and immersing himself in the money column, you may at once assume that he has yet to learn the very elements of the science of Second Childhood. I would even forbid flirtation. I know that it has been said that marriages are no longer made in Heaven, but in hydropathics. But I object to this. Grown-up people should "evolute" backwards into childhood, boys and girls into infancy. If all can be pleased with a rattle and tickled with a straw, so much the better. Picnicking or lawn tennis all day—to this I see no objection. Similarly, I thoroughly approve of dancing all evening, and the more like a contract job the dancing is the more I approve. I have my doubts about short whist. The moment you feel irritation at your partner because he does not understand why you

have led spades from a suit of two, you cease to be a child and become a man again. Chess?—That way madness lies. As for gossip, “a pleasant talk after lunch,” “a cosy chat in the corner” between afternoon tea and dinner—these things I abominate, and do my best to prevent or upset as I find opportunity. I start conundrums of all sorts and sizes. These invariably work a charm on old ladies and elderly gentlemen. Just a year ago, when I went to bid good-bye to General Blank Dashaway, the distinguished and gallant officer who in the waste Soudan cut down twenty dervishes with his own sabre—I make a point of going to hotels and hydropathics frequented by the classes—I found him in a corner of the Black and Blue Drawing-room with a look of seraphic contemplation on his fine features. He took my hand in an abstracted sort of way, and said, “My first is what all young ladies like to have on the third finger”—I had started him on this trail the night before, and he had not yet abandoned it. For the benefit of middle-aged men, especially such as are on the Iron Exchange, I carry about papers of the well-known *Bonne Bouche* type that give prize puzzles. I start these men on voyages of discovery, which may or may not end in a first prize of £50. If the worst

comes to the worst, I commence puns. If I turn in to afternoon tea, and find the ladies sitting silently with their bonnets on and calculating what the bonnets cost, I take up one of those supplements to costume which are ornamental, and perhaps useful, and say, "What, Mrs. Greene, muff-at-tea?" and "Since there is no other muff-in, let me sit down beside you, Miss Browne," and "Quite a military jacket that of yours, Miss Whyte; you look ravishing in muf-ti." Then when the talk at dinner begins to flag, just about the time that the cheese comes round, I burst out with

Shade of the mitey, can it be
That this is all remains of thee?

I have tried this—which is not my own to begin with—at four hotels and three hydropathics, and have never found it fail to inaugurate a night of universal silliness and Second Childhood.

I always take Brownson as my test of the time that I ought to put up at one particular home for grown-up children. He and I spend our all too short Easter fortnight in as many hotels and hydropathics as we can manage to go to with advantage to ourselves. Brownson's favourite study at home—for it happens to be his business, and a very good business too—is conveyancing. The subject is interesting, but just a

trifle dry. In consequence, when he takes what he calls "mine ease in mine inn," he finds relief in the reading of novels full—or as full as he can get them—of Dickensian pathos. Immediately after we have arrived at the first of our series of country houses for Easter, and have secured a private sitting-room, he rushes to the library and secures a novel. If it is what he wishes and intends it to be, I discover the minute I re-enter the sitting-room. There sits Brownson in the big armchair in front of the fire, with the book in his hands, his fifteen-stone frame shaken with sobs, and the tears streaming down his cheeks. I accost him, "Hallo, Brownson, snivelling already!" Then he starts up, throws the book on the table, blows his nose, and bursts out indignantly, "Just like you, Jobsid! There's dot a peddyworth of seddybed id your whole cobbisishid. How could eddybody with a heart help being aggodised whed this poor child—such adduther as Little Dell—dies of a declyde just tweddy biddits before her feeaugsay cubs back frob Suakib covered with beddles? Bad, I feel just as if I were her Uggie Jod!" This is proof positive to me that the charm of Second Childhood is working on Brownson. But I organise a new departure whenever, about the third day or so, Brownson whispers to me, "Do you think, Jobson, there can


be anything between Miss Molly G. Tawny and that little Flibber T. Gibbet? I have noticed these two nights he has turned over the music for her."

Last Easter was a perfect success in the way of a relapse into Second Childhood. Brownson and I found ourselves alone after passing Eglinton Street. I felt strangely miserable and watery-eyed when I remembered that in a few minutes it would be a case of Hillhead, home, and duty. I looked at Brownson. He was crying silently. I followed suit; we snivelled in company. "Jobsid, I cadd help it, old bad. I bust be in Court to-borrow." "So bust I, Browdsid, so bust I!" When a middle-aged busy lawyer is moved to tears by the thought of returning to work, he may rely upon it that he has spent his Easter wisely and well.

MY OWN QUARTER OF A CENTURY.

To think that yesterday completed my twenty-five years as Collector of Sealing-Wax Dues in quaint old Heavy Wet, and that I should not have dreamed of turning an honest penny by publishing my reminiscences, especially of men who are living, had not my life-long friend and chum, A. K. H. B., and worthy David Masson, and dear, delightful Louis Stevenson shown me how to do it! I am sixty-five exactly, and as yesterday I took my favourite walk in my favourite mackintosh, under my favourite umbrella, in my favourite drenching shower, by the side of that sea that groans, and moans, and splashes, and splutters, as it has groaned, and moaned, and splashed, and spluttered for innumerable centuries, I thought within myself that I may have twenty years before me yet. My hair is grey, but I am sound in lung and limb and heart. I can say, "Peter Piper picked a peck of pepper out of a pewter plate," without drawing more than one breath. My eye for human

infirmity and a neat ankle is as keen as ever, and my taste for a dainty dish of scandal is unabated. All my predecessors in the office of Collector of Sealing Wax Dues in quaint old Heavy Wet have gone to Heaven at the age of eighty-five. I have a presentiment that I shall go to the same Place—and not to Another—at the same age. Trump, who is my senior by five years, and who has been Inspector of Quill Pens in Windy Howl for exactly the same time that I have been Collector of Sealing-Wax Dues in Heavy Wet, left me this morning after paying his usual visit of a week. He is fatter than he used to be, and redder about the eyes; and Blunt and Spleuchan, who are also on a visit here, and who came to cold round and Gouda cheese with him last night, noticed, as I did, that, instead of taking one glass of Australian sherry, as he used to do, he took one and a quarter. But he is a good fellow, he is indeed—dear old Trump! When he comes on a visit to me I always meet him at the station, and he always says the same thing to me, “Ha! Clubbes, hoo’s a’ wi’ ye the day?” (This is Scottish humour, and Trump indulges in it because it makes me shudder.) “As the immortal poet hath it, ‘Here we are again!’” Ah, how often, I wonder, will Trump say, “Here we are again!” and how often will it be my fate to ask Blunt and Spleuchan to porridge




with him of a morning and cold round and Gouda cheese of an evening? Trump has taken it into his head that he will see me out, as he puts it, although he is five years older than I am. Living in Windy Howl, he says, adds to one's life. Perhaps it does; but Trump has a thick, apoplectic neck, and I have not. No; I fancy he will find his way to the Better World before me. And sometimes I dream of myself knocking at the Celestial Gate and getting Cerberus Peter to pass me in, and Trump hurrying up to shake hands, with the old familiar grin and the old familiar salutation, "Ha! Clubbes, you here too! An' hoo's a' wi' ye? Here we are again!" But perhaps there is no Scottish accent in the Better World, and no porridge, and no cold round, and no Gouda cheese. *Nous verrons*, as these strange French folks say.

What a queer thing life is, to be sure, and how little things fasten themselves tenaciously on the memory! So holds good David Masson, so holds Louis Stevenson, so holds A. K. H. B., and so hold I. Looking back over those sixty odd years of mine, what is it that I see? Three boys of nine or so, one of them myself, sitting, with bawbee baps in our hands, one broiling July afternoon, on a grassy slope fronting the Firth of Forth. Three commonplace little boys, with mean views of life and very earthly

conceptions of Paradise, M. Zola would have made us out to be. Doubtless, too, he would have noted and published the fact that my trousers were threadbare and a world too wide for me—that, in fact, they had been “made down.” And yet had Louis Stevenson been there—how I wish he had, I should have given him at least a quarter of my bap!—he would have wreathed poetic aureoles round our heads. And he would have been right, for we had been playing at

Neivie-neivie, nick-nack,
Whilk haund will ye tak'?


and the immortal lines were still ringing in our ears. Tammie Tamson, Jimmy Jamieson, and I, after our play was over, had gone to Tibbetson the baker's, and had each spent our Saturday's bawbee in an enjoyable but indigestible bap, steaming hot. Hark! did that startled cry come from Tammie Tamson, and what is that he says? It did, and the words he utters are, “Jimmie! Geordie! there's a gowlock in my bap!” Jimmie and I rush to Tammie's side, and there, sure enough, we see through the gap in the bap (how unconsciously one falls into poetry!) a terrible gowlock—blackest and most abhorred of beetles—marching like Umslopogaas armed with the axe Groan-maker, straight for Tammie's mouth. Tammie threw the bap, gowlock and all, to the ground. We did the



same, although we ascertained on inspection that there were no gowlocks in them. But there might have been. Tibbetson's baps had a reputation for being infested by these salamandrine horrors. We shuddered as we recollected what a narrow escape Tammie, and, indeed, all of us, had had. The very word "gowlock" makes me creep all over still, although other words with similar endings—Greenock, Giffnock, and even Gourock—do not so affect me. For did we not remember how Jock Dryshed, the Orra Man, had swallowed two of Tibbetson's gowlocks at a bite, and how they accounted for the insatiable appetite which Dryshed then developed? They had settled comfortably in his interior, and devoured all the food which the poor Orra Man had intended for himself. Tammie died last year in New Zealand. When I heard the news I could not help surmising that he had at last fallen a victim to one of his old enemies. But why do I mention this trifling incident? Because, for one thing, it is of such incidents that autobiography is made nowadays. Because also the rest of my school-life—the tawse applications, the Latin grammar, the Shorter Catechism, the geography, the fighting with the boys of the opposition school, even the fearful and wonderful parsing—has become to me a misty dream. But I

still see myself, with my "made-down" trousers on, bap in hand, upon that grassy slope fronting the Firth of Forth, and Tammie's shriek still rings in my ear. Tammie is to me as real a personage as Hackston of Rathillet, with his cloak over his mouth—I suppose there were no respirators in these days—and looking on at Archbishop Sharp being murdered, is to my friend Louis Stevenson. Talking of Stevenson, I do think he is on the whole the greatest stylist of our time, although Walter Pater can write decent English too, and so can Thomas Huxley and James Froude.

But I have been digressing. Oh, how well do I remember the first of the twenty-five years I have spent in this dear old Heavy Wet, which has begun to love me, I think, as I have long ago learned to love it. Alfred Tennyson passed through it on his way to Carricktown that year, and took toothache in the Marine Hotel. I did not ask him to porridge or cold round, because he had not been introduced to me; nor did Blunt or Spleuchan, for the same reason. In fact, I did not see Alfred on this occasion at all. But Blunt and Spleuchan happened to be at the station at the time he left. They thought he looked rather cross. Perhaps toothache had kept him awake. Next year Norman Macleod preached



in Heavy Wet parish church—twice in one day. I should have liked very much to ask him to cold round, for I happened to have a very fine cut at that time. On the whole, I should say Norman is the best preacher I have ever listened to, although I have heard M'Gregor and Flint and George Adam Smith. He had not, perhaps, such a good voice as Caird, but then he did not take porter when he had a great effort to make, which Caird always does. You know I am not one of those who think Caird perfect. I remember when he was a candidate for Newton-on-Ayr church I wrote to a friend who was a member of the congregation recommending somebody else, perhaps because I did not know Caird then. But my advice was not taken. As our glorious Burns puts it, "The Caird prevailed," and has prevailed ever since. The third year of my residence in Heavy Wet a bit of the jetty was washed away by the sea, my black cat died of old age, my poor dear wife suffered from a gum-boil, and good old Trump was married. Oh dear! dear! How time flies to be sure! Last year I was at the marriage of his eldest son, Walter, to a very nice girl. I am sure the Walter Trumps will be very happy; they are very fond of going about the country on a sociable. In the year 1870 there was

war in Europe, our Provost broke his arm, and the Sealing-Wax Office added £30 a-year to my salary. This enabled me to keep better cold round, and to ask Blunt and Spleuchan oftener in of an evening during the winter. In 1871 Dr. Hornyhand, our leading medical practitioner, had a visit of a week from John Brown—of "Rab and his Friends," not of Harper's Ferry. Dr. Hornyhand did not ask me to lunch with John Brown, though I think he should, as I had called him in when Mrs. Clubbes suffered from gum-boil. Blunt and Spleuchan were similarly treated, so we had cold round together, and never tried to find out how John Brown looked. The year 1872 was an important one in my life. We had a visit from Mrs. Thinthread, the London novelist. She is a kind of second cousin of mine, and writes fourth-rate serial stories. She invited herself in a way. She wrote me saying she thought of writing a Scottish novel and of putting Heavy Wet into it. Would I consider her visit an intrusion? Perhaps I did, but of course I refrained from saying as much. Mrs. Thinthread came and stopped a month. I had to take her out a good deal in all sorts of weather, and introduced her not only to Blunt and Spleuchan, but to everybody in Heavy Wet that I knew. She repaid them by introducing them all

into her next novel. Those who had been civil she made heroes and heroines; those who had been uncivil, or barely civil, she made villains and naughty adventuresses. To tell the truth, I found Mrs. Thinthread a very exhausting person. So did my wife, so did Blunt and Spleuchan. I took her to Windy Howl and introduced her to Trump. He afterwards said to me that he thought Madame de Staël must have been just such another as Mrs. Thinthread. Somehow Mrs. Thinthread did not take to Trump. She has reproduced his "Hoo's a' wi' ye the day?" in the Scottish part of her novel. I see from my diary of this time that Mrs. Thinthread did not drink porter or Australian sherry, but only a little gin and water of an evening before retiring to rest. I don't know whether she took this as an aid to digestion or to imagination. Nor am I aware what Louis Stevenson cultivates his style on. I wish I was; I should let the world know. In 1873 there was quite an epidemic of measles in Heavy Wet. But I am happy to say that neither myself nor Mrs. Clubbes nor any of our children took it. A strange thing happened that year in our house. Mrs. Clubbes was engaged in drowning our new cat's four kittens in a bucket of water in the kitchen. The door of the kitchen being open, the

poor mother, hearing a mild squeal, rushed in, and, overcoming her fear of water, actually succeeded in rescuing three out of the four. What a wonderful thing the maternal instinct is, and what an amount of courage a tabby cat's frail body can contain! We had not the heart to attempt to drown the kittens again. We kept one of them, and the Blunts and the Spleuchans took the others. In the year 1874 we had a little election excitement in Heavy Wet. William Ewart Gladstone went to the country and was beaten for his pains. For the first time a Conservative was returned for the Comatose District of Burghs to which Heavy Wet belongs. I do not care much about politics. Parties may come and leaders may go, but I am indifferent so long as the Sealing-Wax Office goes on for ever, as doubtless it will. It is enough for me that Mr. Tantallon, our member, is a decent man, who has put several questions for me in Parliament about the management of the Office. In the year 1875 worthy David Masson lectured in our Town Hall—I really forgot on what. I did not hear his lecture—for I was in bed with a feverish cold—nor, if I remember aright, did Blunt or Spleuchan.

Next year I was destined to lose both Blunt and Spleuchan, though, I am happy to say, not through

the instrumentality of death. They received calls, but to Windy Howl, not to a Better World. Blunt, as perhaps I should have said ere now, was teacher of arithmetic in Heavy Wet Academy, while Spleuchan taught classics and modern languages in a ladies' seminary, which we were patriotic enough to believe to be a good deal better than Girton or Newnham. They were my next-door neighbours, and we drifted into that sort of intimacy which means walking together in heavy showers clothed in mackintoshes of the same shape, attending the same church, dealing with the same grocer and butcher, discussing the characters and digestive vagaries of the same persons, and occasionally eating cold round and Gouda cheese in each other's houses. They received the offer of better situations in Windy Howl, and, as they have families to consider, they wisely accepted these offers. But I have missed them much, and their talks and walks still more. But they are really good fellows—are Blunt and Spleuchan—and they always make a point of spending their holidays in what they, too, talk of as “dear old Heavy Wet.” Indeed, I see them as much perhaps as is good for them or for me. Blunt's talk seems more trivial since he went to Windy Howl than it used to be when he and I walked out in our mackintoshes in the rain, and

Spleuchan's nose is a shade thicker, and I imagine also a little redder at the tip, than it was wont to be. But they are such excellent men that even if I were a gossip—which, God bless my soul! I am happy to declare I am not—I should not say or even hint a word to their detriment. And if any decent man should say that I am to be judged by the company of Blunt and Spleuchan which I keep, that decent man will not be very wide of the mark.

And now I find that I have got over only about a half of my quarter of a century in Heavy Wet. But here I had better stop in the meantime. If this first instalment of my reminiscences gets into a fiftieth edition, I can soon have a second ready. Meanwhile the translation of Blunt and Spleuchan to Windy Howl makes a natural break in my narrative. It was not a new departure exactly, but it was the departure of old friends. Oh, Heavy Wet, I am loath to leave thee, even for a little! I love thee as the Athenian loved the City of the Violet Crown, as Andrew Lang loves St. Andrews, as worthy David Masson loves Edinburgh. There are no showers like thine, no seas that splash and splutter like thine, no fogs so like pea-soup as almost to make up for the real article. And if M. Zola tells me that crowds of people walking on the

shore, with rain dripping from their mackintoshes and umbrellas, constitute a dreary picture of human misery, I beg to differ from him. I take the side of Louis Stevenson and defy the Realists. I tell M. Zola that there is more poetry in the sole of one of my goloshes than there is in his whole body.

QUIET PEOPLE—AS A NUISANCE.

QUIET People are so exasperating, and in every way so objectionable to me, that, these being the times when all established institutions and vested interests are threatened with destruction, I intend to lead a crusade for their abolition. Talk about privileged orders, the House of Lords, the Hanoverian dynasty, Spiritual Peers, the hierarchy of the Church of England, Lloyd's Committee, the Parliament House Clique, any and every individual, coterie, or section that is supposed to have special advantages over others—not one of them can be compared with Quiet People. You can easily escape from ordinary privileged folks. But it is impossible to escape from Quiet People. They are to be found everywhere; they pervade society generally; indeed, they are not so much a class as a kind of social atmosphere enveloping the rest of the world, and in which that rest of the world, so to speak, moves and breathes and has its being. Then Quiet People

suggest, in the most irritating fashion, the unruffled surface of a lake. You never find them running to catch trains, scheming to make marriages for their daughters, fussing to obtain preferment for themselves, complaining of the misdeeds or neglect of servants—you can never, in fact, accuse them of strain, hustling, gesticulation, agony. And yet they always do catch trains easily and gracefully; their daughters are invariably married comfortably; they themselves get on in life, and leave their families well provided for; they have the first seats in the synagogue and the best chairs at theatrical first nights. Yet nobody seems to resent their undoubted paramountcy; their domestics, and all associated with them in any way, look as much at ease in Zion as they look and are themselves. Now, I do not like this sort of thing, because, for one reason, I do not consider unruffled lakes to be distinctively and genuinely Scottish. Our lochs—we have no lakes, which are a purely English institution—have, as a rule, their brows puckered with storms, and we ought to live up or down to our climate. In other words, we ought to be perpetually hurrying and struggling. Folks who are not so hurrying and struggling are quite as much out of place in Scotland as

the comfortable English parson of whom it is written that,


When religious sects ran mad
He held, in spite of all his learning,
That, if a man's belief be bad,
It will not be improved by burning.

Now, this is as weak and illogical from the old (and only true) Scottish point of view as the idiotical epigram that "the worst possible use you can put a man to is to hang him." The only use you can put some men to is to hang them; the best use you can put certain men and certain creeds to is to burn them. Sometimes the idea does occur to me that to try to get rid of certain ideas that I dislike by getting rid of the men who hold them savours, to say the least of it, of the rough and ready. Occasionally even a suspicion darts into my mind that, after all, Quiet People may be the salt of the earth, that they may be Wordsworth's unconsciously, but pertinaciously good folks, in whose case, as he says in his mawkish way, "love is an unerring light and joy its own security." But I shut my eyes and ears and mind to any such suggestions. What concerns the noisy classes to which I belong is that while we fume and fret and keep ourselves in evidence, and do all the hard work of political electioneering and philanthropic canvassing and the

like, and, in fact, shorten our own days by bearing the burden and heat of the days of others, these Quiet People reap the harvest of our endeavours. We get all the kicks and—which is really far more embarrassing—the petty votes of thanks, while they get all the ha'pence and all the peace of mind.

Only once did I succeed in agitating a colony of Quiet People, and as my example may be worth following, I give my experience for what it is worth. It was at the seaside. There Quiet People are to be found in the autumn in great numbers and in absolute and unquestioned dominance, partly because they are always able to afford a holiday in the season, and partly also, I fancy, because autumnal sunsets and the fall of autumn leaves seem to suit Quiet People, much as magenta gloves go with the once fashionable "sunset hair." I wished to be quiet too, for once in a way. But when I reached the resort I had selected I found, of course, the best houses in the best streets secured beforehand by Quiet People. There they were in all their annoying happiness, monopolising the beach, playing with their children, visiting at each other's houses, and reading the novels of William Black and Walter Besant. I resolved on revenge. Whenever I am on holiday I write all sorts of letters to all sorts of newspapers on all sorts of grievances, from typhoid

fever to dirty street boys, signing myself "Vindex," "Ferox," "Epidemic," &c. I like to do good by stealth, and to play the part of a moral dynamiter. I determined to play this—especially as it happened to be my only—trump card. Walking along the beach I found, at different places, an empty soda-water bottle, a bit of a letter beginning "Hopping this finds you quite well," some faded vegetables, and the skeleton of a cat. On the spur of the moment I sat down and wrote to a newspaper a tremendous indictment of the place, signed, "A Pioneer of Cholera." The drainage was scandalous; the water supply was infamous; above all things, the beach was neither more nor less than "a free cowp." The letter, when it appeared, "fetched" the Quiet People with a vengeance. They may be Laodiceans as regards party shibboleths or even theological creeds, but they are firm and even passionate believers in drains. They may stand free churches, free schools, even free land, but they will *not* stand a "free cowp." There was a stir, though even then of the quiet determined sort, among the "visitors." They met in each other's houses and conferred more seriously and frequently than was their wont; obviously they had formed themselves into a Committee of Private Safety. Policemen, sanitary inspectors, and finally magistrates made their appearance on the



beach. It was swept and garnished—or, at all events, deodorised. The children were kept indoors for a little; the Quiet People for a few days discussed Hygiene and Sanitation instead of Black and Besant. I triumphed so far. The following year I made a similar attempt, “free cowp” and all. It was, however, a dismal and disastrous failure. The Quiet People had acted, as usual, with silent and successful energy. During the year the drainage and the water supply of their favourite haunt had been placed upon a footing of absolute impregnability. The bogey of a “free cowp” may alarm them once but not twice. I have no hope, therefore, of their being brought down to the level of the noisy classes unless they get sucked into the whirlpool of a struggle over the “fundamentals.” If the Declaratory Act or the formation of a Scottish Church Society does not agitate them, then I see nothing for it but their Disestablishment and Disendowment—especially their Disendowment.

BACK WITH A VENGEANCE.

CHAPTER I.


"IN the name of goodness, what does that mean, Stalker?" I exclaimed.

We had emerged from a bright tea-room in Laigh Street, where, as is the fashion with your modern Parliament-House man, we had been recuperating—"recuperating" is the word used by Stalker, who has a vulgar West Country taint in him, and even talks occasionally of "the comforts of the Sautmarket"—on milk, scones, the contemplation of a pretty waitress's spotless cap, and talk to match. Since our disappointment at not having been included in the division of spoils which followed the advent of the present Home Rule Government to power—we had expected Advocate-Deputeships at the very least—we have set ourselves systematically to live as if the dream of ambition were over, and none but moral triumphs awaited us

in the future. We have abandoned giving dinner-parties, living up to our incomes, and by other social devices seeking to advance ourselves, because having made up our minds to abstain from hope, we have done so thoroughly. I have resolved to sell my house in Drumstick Gardens. I see myself installed in a quiet little villa in Morningside—cheery, chirpy, John Andersonish, doing a little gardening with gloves on my hands. We have given up smoking and—I shudder to think it is necessary to use such a word at all—drinking. We have no headaches, no ecstasies, no pulsations of egotism, no indigestion—not even the ghost of an escapade. Our wives and children, I am bound to say, look all the happier and brighter for the change we have made; perhaps, poor things—for, although essentially unselfish, they are quite entitled to occasionally think of themselves and of the future that is in store for them—they know that at least something is being saved for them. For ourselves, we feel a glow of pleasure—especially when the afternoon tea in Laigh Street is exceptionally exhilarating—when we contemplate the stainless rectitude of our own conduct, and the probability that we may in the not inconsiderable matter of longevity, beat even the men who have passed us in the race of life.

We had been doing this on the particular afternoon

I mention. We had even been doing a little more. We had been surmising what excellent wives these pretty waitresses, so like nuns, yet laughing-eyed and fresh-coloured, would make to the young lawyers and merchants to whom they were dispensing the means of physical and, perhaps, moral health as well, if these same young lawyers and merchants were wise. We had been dwelling on the great improvement in the habits of the Scottish people during recent years, and which we attributed partially, but not absolutely, to the great advance made by the teetotal movement. I had proved to Stalker how absolutely impossible it would be for a Peter Peebles of to-day—if such a being is conceivable—to find a lawyer in Edinburgh that would be so foolish and cruel as to supply him with the material for making—in the language of “Redgauntlet”—a “drunken beast” of himself. He had capped this up by observing oracularly, as we were emerging from the tea-room—having said “Good afternoon” to our waitress—that our grandchildren would actually have to ascertain from some special dictionary or book descriptive of ancient Caledonian customs what was meant by a “tumbler,” a “nip,” and an “eke,” when I was forced to interrupt his strain of optimistic eloquence with the exclamation I have already reported.



CHAPTER II.

Stalker followed my finger. He was startled at least as much as I had been. For there, only a few yards off, and unmistakably about to enter the Old Dunlop Tavern together and in the most open and unabashed manner, were five men, now tolerably well up in years, whom almost since childhood I had been in the habit of regarding as pillars of robust respectability in Scotland. They were Dr. Chrysostom, Principal of the Divinity Faculty in St. Arius College; his favourite colleague and bosom friend, Dr. Gowanlock, Professor of Apocalypitics; Mr. Small, of the great firm of Small, Weed, Jobling, & Guppy, W.S., and well known as a ruling elder both in the church in which he worships and in the Assembly to which he is sent every year; worthy Dr. Melbourne, Bishop of Infidelium, who has not much perhaps in the way of a diocese, but whom everybody likes; and Sir Archibald Lithgow, the foremost and most trusted of consulting physicians.

"A case for Dr. Clouston, don't you think, Walkinshaw?" exclaimed Stalker, and the beads of perspiration stood visibly on that brow which at that very moment I distinctly recognised as one which ought to have been an Advocate-Depute's, if


not a Solicitor-General's. "Let us charter a cab, and go to the houses of all of them."

"Not at all," said I, with positively Napoleonic peremptoriness, for I know that Stalker's weakness is hesitation, induced by a too persistent devotion to "A Defence of Philosophic Doubt." "Let us follow and see what they are up to."

We did so, and so quickly and with such cat-like tread, that we glided through the Old Dunlop swing-door in time to hear a conversation between Denbigh, the fussy and somewhat sycophantish landlord, and his unexpected customers.

"How are you, Denbigh? It is a long time since we've seen each other," said the Principal, as he extended a hand over the bar; "perhaps too long a time. But I'll not be so long the next time, I assure you."

Denbigh shook the hand thus offered him in a gingerly, half-frightened way, as if he were inclined to think that either he or his interlocutor must be losing his senses. But he had to run the gauntlet of a number of such questions (and also answers) as "Denbigh, I hope you have still some of that sixteen-year-old left," from the Professor of the Apocalypics; "Denbigh, you must have feathered your nest well by this time, you avaricious old cock,"



from Small; "I say, Denbigh, I trust you are bringing up your family to an honest trade than the selling of this poison," from the Bishop; and finally, "We're nae that fou, is it not so, Denbigh?" from the eminent physician, which last observation was appropriately enough accompanied by a dig in the landlord's ribs. Denbigh grinned in an imbecile fashion, as if he knew that something of this sort was expected of him by such customers; but evidently he could not help a look of agony coming into his face when the Principal crowned all by saying, "Our throats are like limekilns, Denbigh. So get us a place at once, where we can have a snuff, a crack, and an old-fashioned dram. Your place is built on the box and not on the Gothenburg system, eh, Denbigh? Ha! ha!"

"Take these gentlemen to Box 23, John, and attend to them at once," was all that Denbigh could gasp out. With roars of laughter the five followed an obsequious barman along a sanded passage.

"There is more in this than meets the eye, Walkinshaw," said Stalker, with that unutterable depth in his own eye which becomes him so well.

"Yes," I agreed.

We now approached the bar. Denbigh recognised us at once. He had, indeed, no reason to like us, for we were notorious as champions of the tea-room in


opposition to the tavern. "More escaped madmen," he evidently said to himself, for he gave us a ghastly bow, and said, "Show these gentlemen to Box 24, James."

This arrangement suited us admirably. The charm of the box system is that, while you cannot, without an athletic effort, see your neighbours, you can overhear them. It would be difficult to say whether Stalker or myself is more decidedly the soul of honour. But we had made up our minds that it would be for the advantage of society in general, and for the morals of Edinburgh in particular, that we should do a little eavesdropping. As private detectives, therefore, not as gentlemen or advocates, we felt altogether justified in listening in Box 24 to what was being said in Box 23. Besides, our neighbours talked so loudly—talked, indeed, not only as if they were not at all afraid of being heard, but as if they wished everybody to hear them—that, unless we had plugged our ears, we could not have helped listening to them. We ordered, in the fashionable accent of the day, "Two small sodas."

"Plain sodas, sir?"

"Yes; plain as your face, you ignoramus."

I looked reproachfully at Stalker. The place was already affecting, and prejudicially affecting, his



manners. He would not have spoken thus brutally to an engaging waitress in a tea-room; on the contrary, he would, under the influence of his first cup of tea, have accompanied his order of a second with a pretty platonic compliment, innocent as the kiss of much-married forty-eight upon the forehead of sweet two-and-twenty. Singularly enough, our order was attended to before our companions gave theirs. There was evidently a good deal of debating among them. We heard humming and hawing, and "What do you say?" "Eh?" "No," and—yes, actually—the rustling of notebooks. At last the Principal burst out, "Eureka! I have it! Let's have reaming swats all round."

"You've hit it," shouted the Bishop. "Here, waiter, bring five jorums—jorums, remember, none of your heel-taps—of reaming swats."

"Yessir," said the waiter.

"Ha ha!" resounded from Box 23.

By and by poor John returned in a crestfallen state. "I beg your pardon, gentlemen, but did you say 'steaming vats'?"

He was—very naturally and properly—greeted with "Dolt!" "Donkey!" "Jolterhead!" and finally, "Tell your master to come here." The master came, looking like a convicted murderer leaving the

condemned cell preparatory to execution. "Look here, Denbigh," cried the expositor of Apocalypitics, "where did you get this stick-in-the-mud of a waiter? Look sharp, and send us five jorums of your reaming swats."

"Very sorry, gentlemen, but I am out of them at present. I have ordered a fresh lot, and expect them to-morr——"

Here he was interrupted by roars of laughter and a shout from Small of "Well, well, you old impostor, can you give us five bottles of strong ale?"

"Certainly, gentlemen," and Denbigh again retired from Box 23.

"Just as I expected," "Splendid!" "Could not have turned out better," resounded from the compartment, followed by "Are you quite certain that you are historically accurate about the strong ale?"

"Absolutely certain," answered Small, with W.Sish decision. "Is it not our present mission in these days of Reaction, steps-retracing and back-again generally, to return to the habits and dress of a hundred and fifty years ago?"

"Agreed!"

"Well, then, I'll read you three bills of fare for supper or lunch dated 1748. The first is 'Mutton steak stewed with turnips, drawn eggs, rice and milk,

my Lord's broth, one bottle claret, one white wine, one strong ale.' The second is 'Boiled hens with oyster sauce, cold goose, cockel hags, my Lord's broth, one bottle white wine, one bottle claret, one bottle strong ale.' The third is 'Mutton steak, drawn eggs and gravy, potatoes, my Lord's broth, two bottles claret, one white wine, one strong ale.' Now, tell me, any of you fellows—this is not a conundrum, you will understand—wherein do all these bills of fare agree ? ”

“In all including white wine, claret, strong ale, and my Lord's broth,” answered Small, in the triumphant tone of a schoolboy who knows the difference between the Skager Rack and the Cattedgat.

“What is my Lord's broth ? ” rather inconsequently called out the Principal.

“My Lord only knows,” replied the Bishop ; and to Stalker's horror and my own, nobody seemed shocked at his daring irreverence. “But there's no doubt about the strong ale.”

“Shall we follow it up with white wine and claret ? ” suggested Dr. Chrysostom.

“Not to-day, I think,” said Dr. Gowanlock. “Sufficient for the day is the strong ale thereof. Besides, Revolutions, even when they take the form of such a Reaction as that which we are now engaged in

promoting, must be content with modest beginnings and with carrying their way by stages."

"And yet," sighed Sir Archibald, "I should have liked so much to have dissected—I mean to have tasted—these cockel hags."

CHAPTER III.

Stalker and I exchanged glances. The truth began to dawn upon us. Over a second instalment of plain soda we listened for five minutes longer, and in that time the light of dawn changed to that of mid-day. These five men, the universally acknowledged leaders of society and culture in Edinburgh, had not suddenly gone in for madness or reckless dissipation. On the contrary, they were heroic Reformers of the Reactionary, and therefore better, type. One night, when discussing after dinner in their Homerically mighty minds such momentous subjects as the threatened return of the crinoline, and possibly the stomacher, it occurred to them that they ought to be men a good deal in advance of their time—by going as far back as possible. Sir Archibald explained that Lady Lithgow had taught him by example. At a dinner party a few days before—it was the sixth out of fourteen that they had to

attend in one week—she had appeared in a very becoming chignon. As they drove home in the family carriage, she had confided to him that she had thoroughly drilled her daughters in advance for falling in with the crinoline movement, and suggested that he should wear a queue. The five then consulted on the amount of Reaction they meant to declare for, and decided on a Plan of Campaign. They agreed to go back—since going back means modern progress—to the middle of the eighteenth century. Perhaps, if they fired their blood sufficiently with cockle hags and strong ale, they might even live to see the middle of the twentieth. They were, of course, going in for Moderatism in theology, and the opposite of moderation in eating and drinking. They found that about 1750 everybody who was somebody—the Principal, the Bishop, the great dinner-giving W.S.—lunched and drank in a tavern, and hobnobbed with the landlord. Hence their appearance in the Dunlop that day; it was the first skirmish in the (possibly) Thirty Years' War of Reaction. We learned among other things that, following the example of Home—that Home whose sweetness was so bitterly treated—Professor Gowanlock meant to get deposed by the General Assembly for writing a play which, when

produced at one of the great London theatres, was certain to tempt a London Scotsman in the twopenny gallery to exclaim, "Whaur's yer Awrthur Pennyrow noo?" As for the ladies of the different families, they had made up their minds to revive the days of Miss Nicky Murray and the Assemblies which had been the glories of old Edinburgh. They had ordered sedan chairs, and meant to try a preliminary canter with them when going to and from Mrs. M'Murdstone's evening party next week. As their husbands finished their strong ale, they chuckled at the idea of their performance being told all over the town—with variations and exaggerations—by night.

"Must we join the party of cockel hags, my Lord's broth, and strong ale?" asked Stalker, after the temporary occupants of Box 23 had left it.

"Certainly not," said I, with literally thumping decision. "On plain soda build resolve, the column of true majesty in man."

I ordered a third round. Over it I unfolded to him my rival Plan of Campaign. In life as in politics there are and ever will be two parties which, seeing that, in nomenclature, at all events, we must go back to the past, we may as well call Cavaliers and Roundheads. The Principal and

his friends were the leaders of Neo-Cavalierism. Let us be the leaders of Neo-Puritanism. Let us go in for Socialism in politics, purism in life, thoroughgoingness in all things. Let us refrain from smoking. Let us drink plain soda and tea. Let us eat, after the manner of Cardinal Newman and Cardinal Manning, only what is necessary to keep us in life. So our lights, in the form of example, may shine before men and even women. So argued I, and Stalker rose to the height of that great argument.

"But what about the ladies?" asked he, in conclusion.

"The ladies," I said, almost magisterially, "will, in these days of female rights, think for themselves."

"They will, the dear souls. But tell me candidly, and between ourselves, Walkinshaw, do you approve of the revival of the crinoline?"

"No," I said, with equal candour. "The ladies' dresses that I like most are those that fit like gloves."

"That is my view, too; but whether does it fall under Neo-Cavalierism or Neo-Puritanism?"

The rest was silence.

THESE NERVES.

I AM one of those most unfortunate of all human beings—a man who knows that he has reached the lowest depth of misery, but who never gets all the credit for and sympathy with that misery to which he is entitled. The fact is, I do not get any sympathy or credit at all, except from the tradespeople with whom I deal, and who, sharing the common delusion that I am certain to live to the age of Parr or Jenkins, would never press me for the payment of their accounts should I treat them with supreme and gentlemanly indifference for a couple of years or so. Wherever I go it is the same story. Whenever, in company, the various ailments of those composing it are trotted out—bronchitis, *la grippe*, a torpid digestion, neuralgia—I am invariably disposed of with “Oh, it is useless to ask Tompkins how he is! You have just to look at him to see that he is the picture of health. A man with a colour like that can never know what it is to be ill. Tompkins pretends

occasionally that he suffers from depression. It is not, however, a sluggish liver, but sluggish dividends that Tompkins is a martyr to." And thus, because my face is my misfortune, I am cut off from one of the greatest delights that fall to middle-aged humanity, that of tracing the rise, decline, and fall of a particular ailment. It is better to have had a cough or an attack of typhoid fever and to have recovered than never to have had a cough or an attack of typhoid fever at all. How I sigh with envy as Jobson retells with zest the origin of the rheumatic fever which has kept him from business for six months, and has given him an excuse for visiting all the watering-places in the United Kingdom and on the Continent!

"It all started with that neglected cold I had—you remember, Smithson?—in September." (Commend me to a "neglected cold" for bringing in its train more blessings in disguise than anything I can think of!) "If I had taken your advice, and gone in for a course of Turkish baths when these shivering fits first began to trouble me, I daresay I should have been all right. Or if only I had mustered up courage to go to the golf-course just when the cough began to get troublesome" ("the cough" is always spoken of respectfully, as if it were the Master of Ballantrae, the O'Blackthorn,


or some other Scottish or Irish chieftain), "I believe that two rounds would have driven the nuisance away." And so Jobson rolls out with the utmost delight his dolorous tale of good but self-frustrated intentions, until we all look upon him as a sort of hero and martyr, a man who has been at death's door—but never got any farther than the door. A halo of sweet saintliness, too, seems to encircle the head of Mrs. Jobson. For did she not nurse Jobson through what comes to be known in our circle as *his* rheumatic fever, and travel with him on the Continent? What an anxious time of it she must have had, poor dear woman! And we all put a strain of deep interest into our voices when we happen to meet her and make the usual domestic inquiries. We ask, not in an off-hand way, "How's Mr. Jobson?" but "How *is* Mr. Jobson?"—Jobson, the hero of the all but martyrdom to rheumatic fever. And yet this enforced pause in the life of the Jobsons has really been the means of lengthening their lives. The late Lord Derby, I know, held that the man who can't afford a holiday must afford an illness, and it has been hastily inferred from this that a good holiday is preferable to a good illness. This is a great mistake. A good holiday is at the best but a patch-up of an affair, whereas a really good illness—no make-believe or trifle of a cold—

first of all shakes up the whole system, and then gives it a complete rest.

Now, most unfortunately, no such luck as Jobson's comes my way. I am fair, fat, and forty-three, and I look so well and hearty that were I to tell the truth and speak, like Pope, of "that long illness, my life," I should be laughed at for my pains, or rather because it would be affirmed that I had no pains at all. When I have felt ill and out of sorts, and have tried to look haggard and worn and miserable to be in keeping with my feelings, I have been told, without any equivocation or softening, that I am an arrant humbug. Happy they who can bear their physical crosses in the sight of all men! The person who has only a leg and a half, or is blind of one eye, or has been in a railway accident, should thank the stars that have thus fought for him. Very different is the case of the poor nervous man like myself! He is like the cryptopietist who wears a hair-shirt next his body all his life, which is only found out at his death.

No doubt I have my physical consolations. If I suffer from over-nervousness, I do not suffer from anything else to speak of. "My dear fellow," once said a medical friend to me, "there is nobody that I envy more than I do you; your nerves are like electric bells, and should give you warning whenever anything

in the shape of illness threatens you." That is all very well, but, as everybody knows, there is another side to these modern improvements—electric bells, telephones, and so forth. They give you a vast amount of discomfort, and of that fussy, irritating discomfort which is the worst kind of all. Then the most electric of electric bells are not, so far as I am aware, in the habit of starting a ringing match of their own accord. They must be set agoing by some human hand, or at the call of such an intimate relative as a flash of lightning. But my nerves, if they do not quite start ringing of their own act, are a sort of *Æolian Harp* played upon by all impressions from without, from the sneeze of a cat to the fall of an Empire. Like poor relations, too, they are always with me; and I must hide them away, as we hide poor relations, as if I were ashamed of them. For if I were to follow Jobson's lead, and make a business of speaking of my ailments to everybody I come across, I should be despised as a sort of woman in disguise, subject to hysteria. Now, being on the Planet, and not having the courage—or the stupidity—to leave it by the Stoical or Ibsenian gate of suicide, I am bound to keep on good terms with the rest of its inhabitants. This, however, cannot be done if they despise me. To ensure myself against this contempt—the contempt,



as I say to myself in my heart of hearts, of the brutal materialist for the finely-strung idealist—I must keep myself in good health. So I mollycoddle myself on the sly. If I cannot get rid of my nerves, I give them as little to do as I can. I have retired from the business of conviviality—in which, as in that of brewing on a colossal scale, practically everybody is interested quite as really as before, though not perhaps as demonstratively. I never take hot and rebellious beverages, except at the bidding of my doctor or in answer to an ultimatum from my nerves. There has, in consequence, grown up in me a kind of egotism, which may be very wrong from the standpoint of lofty ideals, but which brings with it genuine pleasure of a kind. No doubt everybody should put up with the plank-bed of duty; on it as—according to Irish and other authorities—on ordinary plank-beds the best and most refreshing sleep is to be found. But I personally believe in the couch of self-righteousness as a means of securing pleasant naps and dreams. And so, if I were given to keeping a diary and recording my sensations in it like a self-conscious Swiss professor or a clever, conceited Russian girl, I should tell in it how my contempt for the gross living and material comforts of people around me has grown, and how my habit of scorning delights, even if there is no necessity for my

living laborious days, has become a second nature. Then I have a very real satisfaction in the feeling that by giving my nerves as little as possible to do in the way of electric signalling, I am taking the best method of lengthening my life. For, truth to tell, longevity is the goal of the nervous man's ambition. Of him, more than of anyone else, it is true that through fear of death he is all his lifetime subject unto bondage.

Hope springs eternal even in the breast of the nervous man, and, as in the case of most other folks, it assumes the form of a dream of a happy future. I do not quite look forward to the day when there shall be no more nerves as there shall be no more sea. But I do look forward to the time when my nerves must have played themselves out and have calmed down—when, in fact, I shall feel what it is to be a calm after a storm. How we lay flattering unctions to our souls, to be sure! And the nearer we get within clutching distance of the Dark Shadow that somewhere in the waste sits and waits for us like a model detective, the more flattering the unctions! There is Smithson, for example, who, when we were lads attending classes in the University, was all for passion, and cared for nothing that was not “stamped in Nature's mint of ecstasy.” I remember how he used to rave of the Tennysonian paradise, “where the

passions, cramped no longer, shall have scope and breathing space." If he could have secured the support of some half-dozen others, he would, with the kind permission of the authorities, have set up such a paradise or Fourierish phalanstery in the neighbourhood of the Falls of Clyde. As everybody knows, however, Smithson, neglecting Tennyson, did not wed some savage woman to give his dusky race a liberal education composed entirely of athletic exercises. On the contrary, he married a woman with money and a plain face to match. And within the last few years, having become bald and podgy and ruling-elderish, he is never done contrasting the stormy delights of youth with the serene pleasures of what he calls "the tableland of life," which lasts, it seems, from forty to sixty years of age. As Smithson will, ere very long, be slipping off this tableland, I have no doubt he will then maintain that the true Temperate Zone of life is between sixty and eighty, when one is relieved practically of all family responsibilities. And then, after the last stage which closes this commonplace, uneventful history, he will, I have very little doubt, contemplate his making a "bonny corp," and will in fancy hear observers comment on the placid beauty of his features in the repose of death. I have not quite reached this stage yet. But I am getting on. I am

tolerably confident that all the efforts I have made in the way of self-preservation will yield their harvest in the form of a more than conventionally hale old age. I expect to reverse the rule which ordinarily prevails with old men. Their second childhood means absolute physical weakness and mental paralysis, if not imbecility. In the second childhood which I expect, however, there will be nothing of the sort. In fact, my second childhood will have the advantages both of infancy and old age. I shall have all the sagacity which comes of intellectual ripeness, and all the gaiety of the irresponsible period of life. Ordinary life, or what is regarded as such by ordinary people, will prove but an apprenticeship or preliminary canter to me. With my physique thoroughly disciplined, my muscles in good order, and my nerves trained and cool at last, I shall just begin living when other people are thinking of dying.

And yet my dream is not wholly undisturbed. Is this living of mine—this “creeping through life in a sort of clever quarantine,” this nursing my nerves to keep their freshness as a sort of *bonne bouche* for the seventies or the eighties—very heroic, or even very manly? “Hang your nerves!” once said Jobson to me when in a rash moment I gave him a hint as to my secret—Jobson in the flush of that magnificent

success, his rheumatic fever! It was very rude of Jobson. Yet I felt there was a little of deserved rebuke in his ejaculation. There is something manlier in driving a coach-and-six through one's nerves than in nursing and preserving them. Then, while nervous people are, in my opinion, the salt of the earth—the Saviours of Society, the Demigods of Humanity, have all been men with singularly susceptible nervous systems—those of them who have really attained this position have been found capable of offering their nerves as a whole burnt-offering on the altar of Duty, of Altruism, or of Patriotism. On the whole, however, my dreams are not very seriously disturbed by such reflections. Everything considered, I prefer a well-cushioned, though obscure, back seat in life to the agony of playing before the curtain—glory, applause, bouquets, and all. But what puzzles me is, supposing I only start life when other folks are dropping it, where is Death to come in?

THE GIRLS I LEFT BEHIND ME.

CHAPTER I.

"BUT how are you off for passions?" And as she asked this leading question she opened a dainty perfumed box, threw away the cigarette that she had smoked to the sweet end, and lighted another at my cigar. She then put the last volume of "The History of David Grieve" in her bag, which opened and shut with a snap that reminded me of a marriage service performed by a clergyman in a hurry, took out a pair of ravishing fur-topped slippers, and looked with meaning imperiousness at me. I was equal to the occasion. In a twinkling I had removed her boots and had substituted the slippers for them, after a momentary glimpse of "clocks" that sent my brain off like a watch when the mainspring breaks.

"Thanks! Hezekiah couldn't have done it better himself, and Hezekiah's a born lady's-maid." She took off her hat and handed it to me. I put it in the rack

above her head. She unloosened her feather-boa a little, put her slippered feet on the foot-warmer, and said, "That's better. Now, go ahead about these passions."

I was rather taken aback, being, as I found myself saying to myself (in that horrid broad Scottish, too), "a young thing just come frae his mammy." However, I stammered out, "Well, I am fairly well off for passions, thank you. I have been in love twice already. The first time it was with the daughter of an S.S.C., who lived in the next street to ours in Edinburgh, you know. But I am M.B. and C.M., and hope soon to be M.D., and I am the son of a W.S. No doubt you've heard of our W.S.'s and S.S.C.'s and C.E.'s in—in—"

"In Saratoga? No, young man," and the decided shake of her sweet *petite* head proved that she spoke the truth. "We're spry in Saratoga, we are, but not so spry as that. But I must say you seem awfully greedy on the alphabet."

"Well, the W.S.'s are the legal aristocracy of Scotland, and they look down on the S.S.C.'s much as the whites look down on the blacks in the States. My father and mother, who were against my marrying into any family lower than our own, did their best to separate us, and were successful. She was broken-

hearted for a fortnight; after that her parents took her to Rothesay. You see we folks in the East always go to the West Coast for a holiday because it is so relaxing, and folks in the West always come to the East Coast because it is so bracing. There she met an advocate who was recovering from an attack of influenza, and was in consequence unable to resist the microbe of matrimony." Here I laughed such a fearsome, eldritch, cynico-sardonical laugh that even my Amurrikan friend became so discomposed that one of her feet slipped off the foot-warmer, and the fur-lined slipper came off. I put it on again and resumed. "She at once accepted the advocate, out of pique, when he proposed to her; I really believe *she* proposed to him. Now, the Advocates are higher in some respects than even the W.S.'s, and he in particular is so very clever that, unless he has one attack of influenza too many, he will be an Advocate-Depute, or at least a Sheriff-Substitute. They are married; in other words, she has checkmated me by marrying above me.

"I thought I should have my revenge in turn. So I made hot love—gas-stove love, in fact—to the daughter of the medical professor whose assistant I became after I was capped. He is one of the leading members of the medical aristocracy of Edinburgh, which is to the legal aristocracy what the Bench of

Bishops is to the Lords Temporal in the House of Peers. He is a man of many letters, for he is M.D., and F.R.S.A., and F.E.L.S., and even F.E.R.O.C.I.O.U.S. Besides, there is an air of distinction about his own name, which, as distinguished from commercial Edinburgh names, is a composite one, like the Dick-Bristos and the Jock-Howiesons. In short, he belongs to the great family of the Tam-Sons. Heloise Tam-Son and I became engaged. But Heloise threw me over, not for an S.S.C.—of that I am so far glad—but for an Ideal of Goodness, which, goodness knows, an S.S.C. is not. She discovered that her mission in life was not to mend one broken heart, but to tinker up humanity at large, or, at all events, as much of it as is to be found at large in Edinburgh. Being blessed—or cursed—with lots of money in her own right, she started a Home for Bruised Reeds, and she now presides over it, dressed very much like a Nun. She told me on the day before she entered her Home that it must be all over between us. I invaded the Home—at all events, I made a morning call on the Superintendent. I did all I could to dissuade her against continuing this experiment. I tried to make her believe that it was a case of temporary insanity, and suggested a short retirement to the seaside or Morningside.

But she said peremptorily that there was no Home for me in her heart. I then told my father that I would drink myself to death in a month, but before doing so would marry the barmaid who supplied me with the deleterious fluid. He suggested, as an alternative step, that I should leave my practice, which was in an infantile condition, for a few months in the hands of a *locum tenens*, and go to London and the Continent. When I came back we could talk over the drink-barmaid project. He supplied the necessary funds. I entered this carriage at Edinburgh, and found your lovely self in possession."

"And so, having seen me for a few hours"—we were slowing down preparatory to stopping at York—"and having talked about the weather and the latest boom in novels, and having compared English and French girls with Amurrikan ones, who combine the best qualities of the others, your next passion is for me?"

I bowed and began. "To see you is to love"—

"No good, young man. I am to be married in the fall to Hezekiah P. Siloam, Boston City, and you can only be a Friend and a Brother. You see, it was all settled three years ago, when Hezekiah's family and ours met at Saratoga. Hezekiah is to be in London in a week with his sister, and we are all going to do

Europe together. Poppa and I have been in your old country for a fortnight. Poppa is that lazy, and I went down to Scotland alone to see our friends there. You are one of my friends, for your Poppa is a second cousin of my Poppa's. Here is your Poppa's portrait, and here is yours"—sure enough, my enslaver produced both—"I would have called upon you, but that elegant Clyde scenery kept me from getting any further till it was too late. But I knew you at once—else do you think I'd have let you talk straight away? No—altho' we Amurrikan girls can do without chaperonage, and all that Old World nonsense, and each of us looks upon every man whom she comes across in the ordinary way as her property, as a sort of half brother, half lady's-maid. Now, you can be all that, Robert—you see I know your name—but no passions, thank you. I am to be a fortnight in London before Hezekiah and his sister come to take Poppa and myself away to the Continent. Poppa's no good now for sight-seeing—he's too old. You'll help me to have a real good time—won't you now, Cousin, Brother, Friend—Robert?"

I promised Selena—her full name I ascertained in due course was Selena Judith Hephzibah—that I would. I would have promised her anything. She and Poppa, who turned out to be a typical American

—a compound of Bret Harte, Henry James, and Howells—lived at the Gingham. I put up at the Gamp, which is close by. For a fortnight I was Selena's slave. She made me drive here, there, everywhere. What galled me most was that she ordered me to go with her to Price's, the great ladies' artist, to give my judgment on some mantles, with which she meant, when she was married, to dazzle One Thousand and First Street.

Hezekiah and his sister came. She was married, but in Selena's presence I should not have given her any consideration, even if she had been unmarried. Hezekiah snivelled horribly I thought; his boots creaked by way of accompaniment; he seemed to me to smoke too much. But in Her eyes I was now nowhere.

I saw them off to Paris from Charing Cross Station. After, by Selena's orders, I had seen finally to the luggage, she waved her suite away and called me aside.

"Kiss me on the cheek, Robert." I obeyed. "You're real good, Robert, and you'll marry one of these Edinburgh girls some day. But don't be too unkind to the alphabet. Goodbye—Robert."

I knew not what I was doing as I walked from Charing Cross Station. I have reason to believe,



from subsequent information, that I must have endeavoured to cross the Strand opposite the Station. In a dream I burst mentally into poetry, not necessarily my own. "So fades, so languishes, grows dim, and dies all that this world is proud of. If that kiss on the cheek had only been on the ——" A hundred shouts, a hundred panic-stricken faces, the figure of a wild horse, a blow, oblivion!

CHAPTER II.

I AWAKE, with heavy-lidded eyes and chloroformed brain, to find myself lying on what seems to be an Irish plank bed in a Russian prison. In a sort of mist figures move round me, particularly one tall figure with a peak crowned with snow. I try to move, but in vain. I find myself a mass of splints, bandages, and chloroform. Gradually my mind seems to be clearing, and with it the room. I find that the snow-topped peak is a nurse with the whitest and most bewitching of caps, the fleeciest and the fairest of hair, the softest and gentlest of blue-grey eyes, and a mouth from which drops that sweet English which coagulates into Devonshire cream after it leaves the lips. I find further that I have been run over by a cab, that I am in Nathaniel's Hospital, that at one

time my life was despaired of, that it will be four weeks before I can be up and about again, that my father has been communicated with, and, living as he does in Nathaniel's Hotel close by, he has seen me every day. And by and by he comes and sits by me—the dear, good, old Pater! But mostly the presence of Sister Agatha—for such I ascertain my nurse's name to be—pervades the room. Her blue-grey eyes dominate me. Her large gentle hands soothe me into peace. She talks and reads to me, and as she talks and reads I ascertain that she is a woman of the greatest culture and refinement, who lives in a world of lofty ideals that are not dissociated from common-sense. Her image drives Selena's face from my dreams. With her, life would be “a large content,” a long life in the Lake District without the rain. Before I left the hospital I told Sister Agatha that I was in love with her.

“You're the fifth patient that has told me so,” she said with her wonted gentleness. “Poor boy, I am old enough to be”—and here a blush of justifiable vanity mounted into her face—“your youngest aunt.” Then she related to me her story. She was the daughter of one Dorsetshire clergyman and the betrothed of another. She had taken to nursing for a time, simply that she might the better


discharge her future duties. Duty, love, refinement, gentleness, the Hundred Best Books—these were Sister Agatha. But Sister Agatha was not for me!

CHAPTER III.

My father wished me when I left Nathaniel's Hospital to return with him to Edinburgh. But the demon of restlessness was not exorcised. I must complete my Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. After seeing him off from King's Cross I took train to Paris. "David Grieve" in hand, I made my way into the circle of Elise Delaunay and her cousins, of art, cigarettes, untidy hair, absinthe, eyes that tried to look manly and were only audacious, shoulders that shrugged without provocation, Bohemianism that was unreal, and Free Thought that was simply an intellectual *can-can*. In three hours the memory of Agatha drove me into Germany. Here I found domesticity that was genuine, in spite of unlimited beer and sausages, simplicity, knowledge (albeit a trifle too spectacled), oceans of classical music. But I became quickly satisfied with a life that is all "practising." I proposed to thirteen girls in succession. Each, however, had been engaged since childhood; the "intended" of each was

an epauletted, scarred puppy of a lieutenant in the Landwehr.

Back to London! "I will wed some savage woman; yes, I'll wed at least a dozen!" Yo ho for the Cape and Mashonaland! At Cape Town I was introduced to a Zulu family moving in the highest Assegai circles. That was enough for me. I took the first steamer back. The weather was delightful. For a time I sulked in my room. At last I joined the dinner table. There sat the prettiest, handsomest, best-dressed girl I had ever met—tall as Agatha and with Agatha's eyes! She was alone. I asked a neighbour about her. He said he believed she was a wealthy Glasgow girl, who had come out on a voyage to the Cape with a brother who had been in indifferent health. On the mention of Glasgow, I shuddered; I thought of the accent. Next day the brother sat beside her at table. I listened to their talk, but heard no accent. However, I knew the test would come with the sweets. The sweets came. She must make a choice. She did. Can I believe the testimony of my ears? She said, not "Semahleeny puddin'," as I anticipated, but "Semolina pudding." After that life could not have been passed more happily than it did on board that ship. Somehow—I don't know how, and it



doesn't matter—I was introduced to Ethel and her brother. I found her not only accentless but sweet, cultured, domesticated, a divine singer, a ravishing dancer—Agatha in fact without Agatha's mission!

Arrived in Edinburgh, I had no difficulty in penetrating into Glasgow, and being introduced to Ethel's father—I found him a wealthy, university-bred merchant, living in the best part of the city, and in the best society in all senses of the word—and her family. All went merry as a marriage bell, and might have ended in a marriage bell had my will been supreme. But one night when we were alone the question of the future capital of a Home-Ruled Scotland came up. I said Edinburgh must be supreme in Scotland. She said Glasgow must be independent. I told her that I had meant to ask her in marriage, but her obstinacy on this point was an effectual bar to my making any such proposal. She laughed merrily, made a mock-gracious bow, and said she was sorry, but she was bespoke to a London gentleman with a property in Devonshire. He was to arrive next night to make arrangements for the marriage. I bade her farewell. I don't think I'll see her again.

CHAPTER IV.

At last! I was "cried" on Sunday! My passions sweeping through me have left me dry—as an official communication from the Circumlocution Office, or a spring east wind sweeping through George Street. But I am to be married beyond all doubt. She—the final She—is not so much bonny as she is cheek-boney. She is thin. She dresses rather dowdily. Her salutations suggest the osculatory masterpieces of a stepmother-in-law. But her "family" is "good"—it is, indeed, a branch of the Jock-Howiesons, and has intermarried with the Dick-Bristos. She is the daughter, not, indeed, of a W.S. or of an S.S.C., but of a C.A., and that is always something. Her education is finished—it was, indeed, years ago. She has money—so much that we are, after marriage, to set up in Drumstick Gardens. Yet, oh, Selena! Oh, Agatha! Oh, Ethel! Oh, all the other girls!

THE NOBLE ART OF INSINUATION.

IN the minds of most folks the word "insinuation" conjures up, not what is noble, but what is most emphatically ignoble. It suggests Iago poisoning the mind of Othello against Desdemona, Edmund plotting against Edgar, and, in general, villainy endeavouring to attain its own evil ends by setting two impersonations of goodness by the ears. But this is simply another case of the success of vice in debasing the coinage of virtue. The grand old habit of insinuation, like the fine old name of gentleman, has been defamed by charlatans and worse. After all, insinuation means no more than what the forgotten humorist and preacher recommends when he says—

In the world's sea, do not, like cork, sleep
Upon the water's face, nor in the deep
Sink like a lead without a line; but as
Fishes glide, leaving no prints where they pass,
Nor making sound, so closely thy course go—
Let men dispute whether thou breathe or no.

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Yes, "as fishes glide, leaving no print where they pass, nor making sound," that is the perfection of insinuation, in the sense of the art of the insinuator. History—at all events, such history as Macaulay tells—records one symmetrically complete act of insinuation. By way of indicating how William and Mary accomplished the same end by different means, he states that when a courtier brought William some very bad bit of scandal, the King gave the culprit such a look as made him wish he had rather swallowed his libel than told it. When, however, a lady friend attempted the same sort of thing with Mary, she turned the conversation by saying, "Oh, by the way, have you read dear Dr. Tillotson's sermon on 'Evil Speaking'?" Nothing could be prettier than this. At the same time, and speaking parenthetically, I should doubt very much whether Mary ever said anything of the sort; and, indeed, I more than suspect that this is one of the clever speeches that Macaulay, following the time-honoured example of Tacitus, was in the habit of putting into the mouths of people who were themselves the reverse of clever. The insinuation put into the mouth of poor Mary is decidedly, even cuttingly, sarcastic. Yet, when one reads her private letters to her husband,

which have recently been published, one will at once see that she is totally incapable of sarcasm. She seems a sweet-tempered, clinging, colourless Little Dorrit thing, who dressed poorly, I should say, and feared her husband quite as much as she adored him.

When virtue seeks, much as the Chinese Empire has been doing for some years, to recover lost territory which has been annexed by vice, she will, if guided by wisdom, adopt some of the methods and weapons of her adversary. So those who would deliberately cultivate the art of insinuation for the express purpose, if not of adding to the sum of human happiness, at least of sweetening ordinary conversation, ought to study, and to study very carefully, the practice of the experts in the art who employ it for the purpose of adding to their own happiness by injuring, or belittling, others. There is no doubt whatever as to the artistic elegance of much popular insinuation, especially that which has for its object the damaging, or the destruction, of character.

"What a clever man Mr. Groomson is, to be sure! I am certain you were delighted with his lecture the other night on the cultivation of the spirit of æstheticism during the Bronze Age."

"Yes, it was a great treat, especially that portion in which he proved that modern evening dress was really the commencement of the degeneration of the age of bronze into the age of lead. By the way, and talking of Mr. Groomson, what a sad thing that is about him and his wife!"

"Indeed, what is that?"

"Oh, haven't you heard? It is notorious that they lead a cat-and-dog life. You remember her nagging ways when she was a mere girl? Well, it seems she hasn't left them off now she is married. Then he has quite a demoniacal temper, especially, as I am very sorry to say, after dinner. The other day, when she was complaining of the solitude of her life, and threatening, as she often does, to return to her mother, he allowed his passion so far to get the better of him as to throw the sherry decanter at her head. Fortunately it was nearly empty, and very light, and so it missed her."

"Dear, dear, that is very distressing."

"Yes, and I am afraid the last has not been heard of Mr. Groomson's peculiarities. It is said that the lecturing committee of his College have lately been taking notice of his bloodshot eyes. If they make an investigation, as of course they ought, I fear he will lose his appointment."

"How sad, and yet how common it is for very clever men to drink or ill-treat their wives, or both!"


"Yes, there was Homer, you remember, and Shakespeare, and Dickens, and Bulwer Lytton, and Carlyle. Really, I could have forgiven that odious Carlyle anything but his compelling his wife to kneel down and lace his big, clumsy, hobnailed Dumfriesshire boots, while he flourished the kitchen poker over her head to the tune of *Ay de mi!*"

As I happen to know, this was a case in which, although there was a superabundance of smoke, there was really no fire. Groomson and his wife get along quite as well as most husbands and wives who feel themselves to be in the relation of equals, not of master and servant, and he, in particular, is about as capable of maltreating his wife as Carlyle was of striking his with a poker. It is conceivable, too, that indigestion, or a severe cold, or even an excess of work, may redden the nose or dim the eye as effectually as a glass of sherry. As a matter of simple truth, it was the first that worked the reverse of a charm on Groomson. In fact, insinuation had degenerated into imagination, which it ought never to do.

The student of righteous insinuation cannot do better, therefore, than follow the method of the

malicious insinuator. He must, however, like every sensible man, start from a final object. The final object of the malicious insinuator is the desire to increase his own comfort by feeling himself superior to, or holier than, the person insinuated against. For the pleasure of superiority the righteous insinuator ought to substitute that induced by the feeling of equality in the sense of fraternity—or sorority. But if he were to proceed on any other lines than those of the habit-and-repute retailer of unpleasant or depreciatory gossip, suspicions might be awakened, and his beneficent designs frustrated. So it may be well in this as in most cases to stand on the defensive, to await unkind statements and turn the current of talk in relation to them. An opening, however, may be found for helping on peace on earth at least in words, and promoting goodwill to men and perhaps even among women.

“Isn’t it such a pity that dear Dr. Dapperwit does not pay a little more attention to his dress? You would notice that his tie last Sunday was all round to one side. When he dined with us on Wednesday night, too, he wore old-fashioned collars almost the size of Mr. Gladstone’s. Now, as he is hardly middle-aged yet—for he is certainly not over forty—this is surely going in for old-fashionedness far too soon.



Of course it is not the dear, good man that is to blame; but don't you think that it is very negligent of Mrs. Dapperwit not to look after these odds and ends, which are very small matters in themselves but come to a good deal when taken altogether?"

"To be sure, dear; but, after all, Mrs. Dapperwit makes a model wife in very many respects. How she takes all trouble and responsibility off the Doctor's shoulders in house and business matters! She looks after the children entirely."

"Yes, and they actually say she pays all the taxes and rates, and does, to all intents and purposes, everything that the head of an establishment generally does. Now, I call that spoiling a husband; don't you?"

"Well, you know, dear, Dr. Dapperwit is not such a *very* strong man after all, and I daresay he preaches all the better for his wife's setting him free to work at his sermons."

"And his sermons *are* refreshing, are they not? Did you ever hear anything finer than that of last Sunday evening on loving one's neighbour? How beautifully he worked out the subject, and showed how one can love one's neighbour by letting him alone, by not thinking evil of him even if one can't think well, by not gossiping about his habits at

table, or his wife's badly-made dresses? And then how nicely he brought in the lines from Burns—

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman—

as being the negative way of loving one's neighbour! One of these sermons of the dear Doctor's of a Sunday evening always makes me happier and more disposed to be at peace with everybody, and to look on the bright side of things."

"I quite agree with you, and when, over a cup of tea after dinner, he smiles brightly and tells a good story—and I don't know anybody that can tell a funnier story when he chooses—you forget about his collars."

"You do, you do! And yet I am very glad to hear that Mrs. Dapperwit's youngest sister is going to live and share housekeeping with them. She doesn't like the collars any more than other people do, though she thinks there is nobody like him all the same. She told me that if she ever had a husband—and surely such a sweet girl won't be long without one—she would make him keep young to the very last. She won't be a week in the house—you'll see—before the collars are out. And then she'll relieve good, dear Mrs. Dapperwit of a great deal of responsibility, and give her time to go a little into society."

All's well that ends well, and I don't think that any of the folks who were concerned in this conversation either as participators or as subjects of talk will be the worse for what was insinuated in its course. Yet the conversation is, I admit, but a preliminary canter, a simple first exercise, in the noble art. Insinuation, like everything else, requires a beginning. Moreover, while individual effort and perseverance count for a great deal, I suspect insinuation will, if perfection is to be attained, have to be cultivated gregariously and on system. In short, there will have to be Insinuation Societies, Classes, and, finally, Professorships. I do not see, indeed, why a great Association for the Purification of Moral Sewage should not in time be formed; its experimental works might be begun not a thousand miles from home. But in the meantime one might be content with small beginnings—with, say, the formation of Home Insinuation Circles. These would have, of course, to be guided by rules, and the rules in turn would have to be enforced by penalties. For example, every member of such a Circle could be fined £5 for making a single evil hint regarding his neighbour; £10 for a second offence, and so on till expulsion is reached. But, contemporaneously with the formation of Circles, I should hope for, if not insist on, the establishment of Chairs of Insinuation

in our Universities. Insinuation, rightly understood and worked out, adds to the happiness of at least two people for the moment; and, as Emerson and many moralists before him have reminded us, the present moment only is ours. If a Professorship of Insinuation could be represented as a Professorship of Daily Happiness, I think there could not fail to be a plethora of subscriptions for its endowment. Notwithstanding all the evil things that are said of the age, it is not wholly given over to materialism, money-making, and Australian Banks. There are still enough of perfectionists, idealists, and dreamers left among us to be satisfied with a moral three per cent.

THE GOLFING ROMANCE OF THE PERIOD.

CHAPTER I.

"How many did we take to that hole, dear?"

We were not in a crowd, but in a foursome. The term of endearment had slipped out unconsciously, but it was all the more sincere and acceptable on that account.

"Two, darling," I exclaimed rapturously.

As a matter of fact we had taken eight; but we had had such a succession of bad lies that I was justified in considering the addition of one to be of no account. Besides, everything is fair in love, in war, and in golf, which is a combination of the two. I was determined to win Clara at all hazards, even to the extent of declining to regard a bunker in which four strokes had been played as a hazard at all. It may be thought that Clara herself must have seen that we had taken more than two strokes to the hole. But it was the first time she had been

over the long course, even in a foursome, and was it very surprising that she should not be links-eyed? Someone—needless to say that he was one of our opponents—was kind enough subsequently to explain the actual position of matters to Clara, and for twenty minutes or so I rather fell in her estimation. Even when we at last won a hole indisputably on its, and still more our, merits, she did not brighten up and look ancient kindness on my pain, as I think she might and ought to have done under the circumstances. On the contrary, when, on proceeding to the next teeing ground, I said, "My honour," as indeed I was quite entitled to do, she muttered sarcastically, "Your honour!" and without any solatium in the way of "dear." However, it is truer of golf than of anything else in life which is worth living for, that nothing succeeds in it like success. We drew slowly ahead of our opponents. This I knew in my own heart was due to that "steadiness" of mine for which I am justly famed. (Yet, by the way, I wish my good friend Walkinshaw would cease to treat me to such compliments as "Nice, quiet shot that, Stalker," "You're steady as a rock, Stalker," and "There is one thing I will and always do say of you, Stalker; you may be short as a rule with your drives, but you're always on the line."

If Walkinshaw only knew how I writhe under these remarks, which he generally accompanies with a kindly, half-paternal clap on the shoulder, and how much rather I should like to be told that I am "brilliant but erratic," and that "occasionally my approach shots are simply superb!") But I gave Clara the credit of every bit of luck and good play that fell to our lot. I did not presume to say "darling" again all at once, but I led up to it with such ejaculations as "Splendidly played!" "A lovely shot!" "The sweetest thing in approaches I ever saw," "That putt was simply delicious," and "Beauty!" At "beauty" Clara blushed, and so I repeated it as often as I could with any show of reason. And then in one of the pauses in the game I remarked in a very audible aside to our lady opponent—she was the youngest of the three Miss Bulgers—"Did you ever know anyone acquire an easy, all-round swing in such a marvellously short space of time as Miss Niblick?" This bait took, for shortly afterwards Clara said to me, in a tone as if she were half-relenting, "How would you say that I drive now, Geo—I mean Mr. Stalker? and"—here her voice took a touch of reproach—"tell me the truth, no matter how bitter it may be."

"With the full St. Andrews' swing," I answered unhesitatingly, "I assure you, Cla—I fear I should say Miss Niblick."


A little later she condescended to ask my opinion. "Should I take my spoon here, Mr. George?"

Looking down at her lithe *petite* figure from my altitude of six feet three, as the Centuries looked down from the Pyramids on Napoleon, though ever so much more lovingly, I said, "Ah, if you would only take your spoon—your long spoon—for ever, Miss—Clara!"

"Don't be silly," she said, and blushed again, and smiled.

I grew bolder, as we took hole after hole from our rivals. At length we reached the plateau, from which you play to the Priest Hole—which is the Presbyter Hole writ very large indeed—four to the good. Here we paused to breathe after the toilsome ascent and to look at the sea and Arran. The view is superb—when you are four holes to the good. Then an inspiration seized me.

"Tell me this much, Clara—I must call you Clara once more—has any one stimied me in your affections? I'll drive this hole ever so much better if you answer my question in the negative."



"No," the sweet girl answered, in tones that were low but firm as the putt of a professional.

"Then will you lend me your driver?" She held it out to me. I took it, and having secretly touched with my lips the place where *her* hand was accustomed to hold it, I drove as man never drove that hole before. The ball was seen to leave the tee, and to soar high in air. Then it was lost to view. It was a "gutty," and I have sung its praises in a song, the chorus of which runs thus—

My good gutty ball
That triumphs o'er all,
That stands iron and creak
The best part of a week,
That's proof 'gainst the mashie,
Though struck never so slashy.

"A good ball by the click of it, I should say," said my opponent, with a sigh of dejection. His own had been topped, and had fallen flop into the ravine in front of the teeing ground. Four strokes were struck before he and his partner emerged uninjured from the dreadful close. The youngest Miss Bulger looked hot and annoyed, and I could not help contrasting her with Clara. But now we in turn felt some little anxiety. My ball, hit so wisely and well, was nowhere to be seen. We searched high and low, east and west, for it, but without avail.

We were on the point of giving up the hole, when a happy thought struck me. "Go to the putting-green and see if it is not there," I shouted to our caddies. They went, and in a minute we heard the joyous shout, "In the hole." We rushed forward with tremulous eagerness. The news was true! There, in the bottom of the hole, lay my good gutty, like worn-out three-year-old innocence sleeping in its cot. I looked at Clara, and Clara looked at me! There was a light in her violet eyes that I had never seen before. Impulsively she put out her hand. I took it. "You for a player!" she said, and I cheerfully paid the fine imposed on the man who takes a hole in one—but in coin, not in alcoholic kindness. Clara and I were abstainers from everything but love and golf, and our boys were tea-caddies.

CHAPTER II.

AND now a thing befell us to which I question if there be a parallel in the annals of golf, or if there be such, it is to be found in "That Fiddler Fellow," by Mr. Horace Hutchinson. We were six up when it fell to me to drive at the Parnell Hole. Our rivals were miserable. The youngest Miss

Bulger looked as if she would have been glad of a good excuse for a good cry. Clara and I were so happy that I felt a strong desire to make those near me happy too. "You won't mind," I asked Clara, "if I play a duffing shot? It will brighten them up a bit. We can afford to lose a hole."

"Certainly, George"—I was George then, and ever after—"play a Grant-Duffing stroke if you like."

I was as good as my word. By a hit, which was a masterly combination of toeing and heeling, topping and taking the ground, slicing and sclaffing, I sent my ball far into the reaches of the Parnell Bunker, where red gutty had never gone before. We found it on the top of a little mound of sand that looked like a miniature Goatfell. "A teed ball," I said to Clara, as I handed her the mashie. "Just flick it off gently, as if you were using a duster." Clara did as she was told—so unlike a woman!—and hit something hard. The ball bounded away on to good ground. "That sounded like bone." "Hush! was that not a groan?" Clara and I had burst into verse without being aware of the fact. We looked, and lo! beneath the sand we observed a wriggling movement. Then a man slowly got up and looked about him. He had a bald head and a red angry face and a white vest.

"It is really too bad of you, Clara, to hit a man when he is down like that."

"My long-lost Uncle Sandy," shrieked Clara, and hid her face in a bunker made by the creases in the white vest.

"Very much your Uncle Sandy, indeed," commented the youngest Miss Bulger.

This was her first pun. Unhappily it was not her last; on the contrary, after it the Deluge. A melancholy future was in store for her. She married a man who doted on her, and brought her home golf cups, trophies, and charms galore. But she took to punning when playing in foursomes with him. He bore this private calamity patiently till it became a public scandal, and the result was a judicial separation.

"And they said you were dead all these months, Uncle Sandy! And Cousin Baffy has actually taken possession of your house, and declares that he is your heir! Now, you always said that I was to get your money. George, here—Mr. Stalker, I mean—has laid a ball upon it. Now, you will promise me, dear—darling—Uncle Sandy, that you won't die again, even for six months, without making me your heiress? And where have you been?"

"Hypnosis," said Uncle Sandy, rather pettishly

and peckishly, for he had not seen, much less digested, a meal for six months, "will explain anything and everything, without causing you a moment's anxiety for the future."

These are the words of Keyork Arabian, the great master of the Hypnotic art, in "The Witch of Prague." But doubtless Uncle Sandy did not plagiarise; it was only another case of Adams and Leverrier.

"Go on with your game, Clarikin, my lassie, and the quicker you finish it the better. If this young gentleman—Georgie Porgie, do you call him?—will give me some pudding and pie at his Club, I'll take it very kind."

"Certainly, sir, I'll put your name down for three days, and you can eat the whole time."

He did, and beat the record in the matter of eating, as in most things else. His visit to the Club was indeed not unlike the descent of the Channel Fleet, with its thousands of mouths to feed, on a village on the coast with only a village supply of bread and beef.

As may have been seen, Uncle Sandy was not disposed to be communicative; yet we managed to get his story out of him in instalments as we paused between our strokes. It was short and simple, but

not at all sweet. Long ago—ages ago, in fact—Uncle Sandy and Another Man, whose name he declined to give, had been rivals in love. The girl they were in love with jilted them both—and quite right, too, from all I could learn. So they became deadly enemies. Both took in turn to drink, tobacco, croquet, mesmerism, billiards, ballades, lawn tennis, and finally Hypnotism. Uncle Sandy confessed, indeed, that he had, not as plain Sandy Niblick, but as Signor Alessandro Hazardo Niblickini, made a fortune as a Hypnotist. He had even bought Sannox Lodge, which, with its grounds, Clara fondly hoped would be his marriage present to her.

“Wha wud hae thoct it,
Hypnosis wud hae bocht it?”

murmured the youngest Miss Bulger.

That day exactly six months before, Uncle Sandy and The Other had met on the links. They had discovered a subterranean passage of the Horace Hutchinsonian sort between the Parnell Bunker and the Storehouse of Gems at the bottom of Ailsa Craig. They dodged each other through the passage for a whole afternoon. Uncle Sandy emerged at last from the Parnell Bunker to enjoy a smoke. As he was lighting a cigar his rival gave him a tap on the breastbone. The breast-

bone, as is well known, is the Achilles Heel of the Hypnotist. A tap on it sends him off; a tap also wakens him up. But for that flick with Clara's mashie, Uncle Sandy's nap would have lasted a few centuries.

"And what about The Other?" asked Clara.

"Dead as a door-nail," answered Uncle Sandy. "The tap that brought me to life sent him, in accordance with the Laws of Hypnotism, to Jericho. The Gems will be yours, Clarikin, and Georgie Porgie's, if the Club grill is up to the knocker."

"How nice!" we both said.

Meanwhile the match had been won—seven up and five to play. Happy and contented, I had been slow-backing, taking it easy, and not pressing—except Clara's hand occasionally. We were four up on the bye; our score, which we had kept faithfully, was, to say the least, respectable. Clara had driven a long shot from the tee at the last hole. Our opponents had played their third; their ball occupied a commanding position on the top of the hillock that looks down on the putting green. At this moment we noticed some excitement in the vicinity of the Club House; a gaily dressed crowd were moving towards the green. I saw it all; we were the last of the mixed foursomes playing for prizes.

A girl friend of Clara's hurried up and exclaimed, "What's your score?"

They compared notes, and Clara came to me in great excitement.

"With that love of a handicap of 36, the first prize is mine if we take this last hole in 2. Put the ball in, and I'll marry you in a month, George—dear."

Deliberately I took my brassey, and took in the situation, including the enemy's ball. Then I glanced at Clara. She must have seen despair in that glance.

"Do hypnotise George for once, Uncle Sandy—dear, good Uncle Sandy!"

Uncle Sandy rather liked me, I could see; besides, he was hungry and wished the play over. He looked me Masterfully in the eyes, and muttered

"Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie,
Kissed——"

I struck. The ball flew like a bird from my brassey. It descended into the valley, it mounted up the hillock, it cannoned off the enemy's ball down on to the green! It reached the hole, trembled on the lip, and went down! A roar of applause apprised Clara of the fact. She fainted into the arms of Uncle Sandy. The ruling passion was, however, strong to the last, for she murmured as she fell, "Grip firm with the left."

CHAPTER III.

It is a delicious evening in the end of August. The stock of daylight is almost exhausted. Clara and I—we have been married thirty happy years, and, having played on an average a couple of four-somes a day, are healthy, fairly wealthy, and wise—are resting in the comfortably-cushioned seat that makes the bunker at the second hole a boon and a blessing to both men and women. For the dear old course is the same, and yet it is changed. There is a refreshment buffet at every third hole. Each bunker is as before—a splendid hazard while play is going on—but is so arranged that when there is no play, or when rain is falling, you have but to touch an electric knob in the turf, and out come an awning and a seat. Electric balls, driven by electric clubs, are now the vogue. The record score of the green has been reduced from 68 to 27; I have attained it myself.

Clara and I are very, very happy in ourselves and in our children. Horatia, our elder daughter, is married to the leading professional in Timbuctoo; Balfourina, the younger, is engaged to the son of the leading club-maker in the town we live in, in whose shop also Everard Hilton, our

second son, is a rising journeyman. A good, steady lad is Everard Hilton; you may always rely on his doing the round in 32. He, too, is engaged, and to a sweet little thing just such as Clara was when we played our immortal foursome. They come up, happiness in their eyes; they are first in the mixed foursomes with a score of 33. But they are not thinking of themselves even in this moment of supreme bliss. Everard Hilton waves a yellow envelope. "From Laidlay Ball, I should say, guv." Laidlay Ball is the eldest of our family, and is qualifying—or is supposed to be qualifying—as a "medico" at Edinburgh University. I open the envelope and read aloud, "Plucked in final. Won Allahabad Cup in 21; lowest score yet reached. Offered Singapore Green; a thousand a year and grub. Wire advice."

"The messenger is waiting," says Everard Hilton; "the answer is prepaid."

"That is thoughtful—just like my Laidlay Ball," said Clara.

She always styles the lad by his two names, because, with that delicacy of feeling which distinguishes her, she does not wish to indicate a belief that she thinks either of the two great ex-champions the stronger player. We look into

each other's eyes for an answer to Laidlay Ball's question. I interpret her glance by writing on the telegraph form, "Better accept."

"It is a pity so much money has been spent on his education," she says with a sigh after the die had been cast.

Like the rest of her sex, Clara is fond of locking the stable door after the steed is stolen.

"But he'll probably not kill quite so many people in his new profession as he would have done in the other. And what does he mean by grub, George?"

"Chickens and champagne, love. That is the food these Clubs in our colonies and dependencies supply their gentlemanly professionals with, and yet they speak of Singapore as being in the Straits Settlement!"

And now comes still evening on, and the sun prepares to retire for the night. Already we can see his couch of fire prepared for him. And our young people come round us leaning trustfully on each other.

"Let us have the dear old song once more, pater," suggests Everard Hilton.

And to the sinking sun and over the rippling sea there rise the strains of—

My good gutty ball
That triumphs o'er all.

The mingling of the contralto of the girls and

Clara's soft soprano with my tenor robusto—preserved by crying "Fore" and "One off two" in foursomes—and the deep Herr Formesish basso of the young men whose voices are breaking, is delicious. It is the Ecstasy of Golf. Its echoes roll from Hole to Hole, and grow for ever and for ever.

THE HEARTLESS MAN.

NAPOLEON—the first and only one, of course—is credited with having declared that he loved nobody but his brother Joseph, and that even in Joseph's case that love was a matter of habit. I strongly suspect, however, that Napoleon, whose biography has yet to be written in a sympathetic spirit, has been done great injustice to, and by nobody more than by himself. It was a fashion with him, with Byron, and with men a good deal smaller than either, to make themselves out to be worse than they were. Be this as it may, the Napoleon of the popular imagination, if not of historical fact, is the incarnation of Heartlessness. He will be the typical or colossal Heartless Man till the world find a worse. And yet what busy man of middle age is there that has not a secret sympathy with Napoleon when he cleared his mind of the cant of sham loves, sham sympathies, and sham cordialities, and stated his actual position? Who is there that does not, when,

after hard struggling, he has made his way up the hill of youth to the table-land of the forties, pause and take an inventory of his subjective effects in the way of emotions? And if he does this in the spirit of honesty, what can he say of nine out of ten of the loves and friendships that in his youth he swore would be eternal—and meant to be eternal? Even if death has not claimed its rights, they have been extinguished by the action of time and circumstances. Gone for ever are the days when, having left school and embarked on the sea of life—(one thought pompously and fondly of one's position as "embarked on the sea of life")—one used to write letters of eight pages once a fortnight to each of one's old friends, fully intending to keep the practice up till the end of the chapter! Our friendship was to surpass the loves of women—"uncertain, coy, and hard to please"—for we knew all about them, or thought we did. Where, indeed, can you find cynicism to match that of ignorant and unsophisticated seventeen? The practice was kept up faithfully for a couple of years—and then was abandoned for ever. Would a revival of it be a possibility? Just the other day something or other brought my old correspondent John Smith to my memory. John is now within a too easily measurable distance of fifty—so I am told—and he is bald with


that polished marble sort of baldness which you can see at a glance is not of yesterday. He is married, and has "a son in the business," and is himself in training for the eldership, and takes an interest in politics, and occasionally lectures to societies, and altogether is a very commonplace, every-day beaverine sort of person. Yet John and I were boys and read novels and groaned over Euclid and took long walks together. We even started a work of fiction on the Beaumont and Fletcher principle of collaboration, which was brought to an untimely end with the close of the second chapter and the remarkable statement, "The village clock tolled twelve, and the stentorian voice of the watchman vociferated one o'clock!" Well, as I have said, something or other brought back John to my mind the other day, and the pretext of a tear dimmed my *pince-nez*. So I went to my desk and started on a sheet of paper—"My dear John, after all these years I daresay you will have quite forgotten your old friend Bob Brown." There I stopped, and even now this work of art and of heart has got no further. For after this little burst of feeling, I dried up—like the streets of a seaside resort after a shower—and became middle-aged, sceptical, and prosaic once more. I began to analyse my own emotions, and the man who analyses his own emotions is lost, at all

events for emotional purposes. How silly, I found myself saying to and of myself, to write "My dear John" to a grown-up man with a family and a bald head and an interest in politics and an enthusiasm for bowling tournaments! There is something manly and sensible and level-headed and to the point and all the rest of it in "My dear Smith," or "My dear Bismarck," or "My dear Sodor and Man." But "My dear John," addressed to one who is not a son or a brother or a cousin, or at least one of your wife's relatives, and as such in the habit of "coming about the house"—why, the idea is altogether preposterous! And then the other notion of my suggesting "after all these years I daresay you have forgotten your old friend Bob Brown"! Of course, he must have forgotten me—he would be a sentimental fool if he had not had a great deal more to do than to keep Bob Brown in his memory. Again, suppose I had actually sent such a letter to John Smith, what a sentimental fool *he* would have thought *me*! Then I happened, quite accidentally of course, to look in the glass and get a glance at my own polished, bald head, my well-to-do forty-three inches round the chest—suggestive of as many hundred pounds in the bank—and, above all, my immaculate white vest. There is a world of meaning—but not of boyish emotion—in a white vest.

It suggests comfort, ease in Zion, and even out of it—a mind at peace with all below, a heart whose love is innocent, no doubt, but is also thin and washed out. Those reformers are wrong who are perpetually saying that the chief obstacle they have to contend with in this world—which does not move rapidly enough for their taste—is the vested interests. It is in reality the great silent array of the white-vested interests that are “the enemy.” All this flashed through my mind, and with it came a humiliating sense of the incongruity involved in a citizen like myself, who, although not the Thane of Cawdor, is nevertheless “a prosperous gentleman,” appearing, white vest and all, in the character of old friend and under the name of Bob Brown! I am convinced that I shall never be able to finish this work of art and of heart. In truth, it would not be a work of heart at all. Whatever feeling I may have had for John Smith in the remote past has died out. It is not that I dislike him; I simply have no feeling about him whatever.

Yet whoever makes this or a similar confession under similar circumstances is generally put down as a Heartless Man. What is “nobler,” what indicates a “finer spirit,” than to remember the friends of one’s boyhood, and, when opportunity offers, to be as cordial


to them as one was at that stage? What is considered "shabbier" or more "snobbish" than to forget and turn one's back on such friends? Many a man, too, who is doubtful as to the "nobility" and "fine-spiritedness" involved in the remembrance, and as to the meanness and vulgarity involved in the forgetfulness, yet gives a sigh when he perceives the actual state of his feelings and regards it as a proof that spiritually he is on the down grade, or at least that something has gone out of his life. A truce to this bogus pensiveness! Let a man inclined to give way to it, or to think it the proper frame of mind for him to be in, take a bath in the writings of some optimist—Emerson for choice—and do justice to himself as well as to others. It is no more a crime to outlive one's loves and friendships than it is to outlive one's Latin quotations and the Binomial Theorem. Am I to be supposed to have abandoned the sacred cause of culture because I brood, not upon second aorists or the Formal Logic, but on the eternal problems of Duty and Destiny? Every scientific tyro tells you that your whole physical system is renewed once in seven years. Why, then, may you not take in a fresh stock of affections with this remaking of the blood and the brain? The Heartless or Selfish Man—the two odious adjectives are used in about equal measure and are



equally objectionable)—is not he who sets his heart on different objects at different periods of his life, but he who at any particular period plays fast and loose with somebody else's heart or his own finer feelings. At any rate, the undoubted fact remains that a man in middle life—and it is invariably at this period that he is stigmatised as being selfish—has only, as a rule at all events, a heart for his family and kinsfolk. For the rest of the world he has justice in its time-honoured sense as *constans et perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi*, and for individuals he has mercy—just so much of it, however, as to temper justice, not enough to overwhelm or submerge it. Does he, then, quite throw overboard the law which bids us owe no man anything, but to love one another? By no means. The law is imperishable, but it may be observed in a variety of ways. Whoever spares a portion of the leisure that is left him from the performance of duty to cherishing some principle, or attempting to realise some ideal, or even to riding some hobby, is giving up a portion of himself in virtue of his doing so to mankind.

What makes the lot of the Heartless Man—in the popular but incorrect sense of the phrase—all the harder to bear is that he is invariably contrasted with someone who is declared to be “All Heart,” and who

wears the whole of that heart on his sleeve? He is a tolerably familiar figure, and as overpowering as he is familiar. He is full to overflowing of the milk of human kindness. He has almost invariably a number of "causes" on hand, mainly of the philanthropic sort. He is always discovering some class in the community that it makes his "blood run cold"—this is his favourite phrase for expressing sympathy—to see in such a state of misery. He takes as deep a concern in Darkest Africa as Mr. Stanley or Mrs. Jellyby. Even when he is not philanthropising on a large scale, there is always somebody or other in whom he takes what he calls "an interest." He has, in fact, as many "interests" as a susceptible young man between eighteen and twenty-four has "loves." I am very far from saying that the All-Heart Man is neither sincere nor useful. On the contrary, I am firmly convinced that in the first instance he is keenly sensitive and emotional. The sight or even the knowledge of human suffering on either a large or small scale makes him genuinely unhappy. It gives the All-Heart Man equally genuine pleasure to see others—and especially the young of both sexes—as happy as circumstances around them will permit, and to aid personally in bringing about that happiness. Then the work that is done by the All-Heart Man is intrinsically good, and should be done by some one.



Nor do I envy him the praise that is bestowed upon him. The person who is perpetually having votes of thanks given him lives, I should say, in a very enervating atmosphere. But the All-Heart Man succeeds in living in it, and in liking it. That is his business; if he chooses to play the part of Emotion-conductor for other and unsentimental folks, they ought to be grateful to, rather than contemptuous of, him. Still, one or two words of criticism may be offered upon him quite in a self-defensive spirit, however. For one thing, the All-Heart Man can hardly fail to become a trifle self-conscious and theatrical. For another, he is unable to do much of the hard prosaic work of the world, and for the simple reason that neither he nor anybody else can put a quart of work into a pint-pot of time. This work must be done, and as the All-Heart Man has no time to do it, the Heartless Man must do it for him. The general arrangement between the two is that the Heartless Man works that the All-Heart Man may weep—and get all the credit that is involved in weeping for mankind at large. The arrangement is a good enough one, like most things in this best of possible worlds. But the Heartless Man may be excused for occasionally murmuring that he has to make all the ha'pence and get all the kicks.

UNSELFISH DISHONESTY.

I AM not an author, but I am a self-constituted authors' representative. It is I that know—and tell in America all about—the marriages, the families, the ailments, the investments, and, above everything, “the early struggles” of most living and even of a few dead writers. I have a small competence, a great imagination, and a weakness for knowing literary folk. Given these three things, and what can you possibly have but an authors' representative, purveying more or less authentic, but invariably interesting, information to a world lying in daily newspapers and circulating libraries, about its pets? Of course I have my disappointments like everybody else. My especial disappointment at this moment is that I have not been able to annex Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson and Mr. Rudyard Kipling to my domain. I have a strong suspicion that each of these gentlemen has a representative already. Otherwise I cannot make out how their movements, and especially their accidents

and illnesses, are so well known when and even before they happen. Now, if it had not been for the existence of these only too efficient representatives of Messrs. Stevenson and Kipling, how I should have revelled in publishing such things in St. Louis or Chicago as "It seems but yesterday since dear old Louis and I were members of the Edinburgh Dialectic Society. I wonder if he remembers how I took the affirmative and he the negative in leading off the great debate on the question, 'Should capital punishment be abolished?' I then foretold—to himself—the greatness that would be his, and slapped him on the back and said, 'Whatever you do, Robert, my boy, don't cut your hair.'" I am seriously disappointed, too, at not being able to rush into print with "I wonder if Ruddie—(there was no 'Rudyard' in these old campaigning days in the North of India)—has forgotten how he and I, when special correspondents, used to discuss brandy-pawnee in the canteen at Simla, and how I said to him that if he would but appear in print with his delightful stories of Irish soldiers, he would make a fortune in no time!"

But since these are forbidden or hopeless pleasures to me, I must try to turn a perhaps dishonest but yet unselfish penny by selling such literary wares as I have. It is tolerably safe, if you are an authors'

representative, to publish anecdotes of the dead, provided always of course that these are fairly complimentary. Thus I made a hit and not a miss when I declared, "I think Dickens would have been living to-day if he had taken the advice I tendered him six months before his death. How vividly do I recall that pleasant little dinner we had together in the dear old Roman Nose just before he started on his reading tour in the North of England! We washed down a steak and chips with a bottle of the sound and reasonably cheap claret which Charlie—(we were always 'Charlie' and 'Jack' to each other, and ever will be)—preferred to all the vintages of Spain or Champagne. He never seemed to me in better spirits than when, over a cup of coffee and a pipe of twist, he told me all about his readings, and how he liked such work, and how it paid him. And then I said to him—

"'Charlie, old pal, you'll excuse the frankness of your most sincere friend; you are burning the candle at both ends.'

"'Perhaps you're right, Jack, dear old fellow; but I am in for this business, and must go through with it,' and a pensive look came into his eyes. I never saw him again.'"

That was, too, although I say it myself, a very

interesting story that I was able to tell some time ago of my dear old friend Thackeray. "A few years before his death I one day passed him just as he was on the point of entering the Garrick Club at lunch time. (I never knew anybody so fond of sardines on toast.) I went up to him in my usual hearty way, shook him by the hand, and said—

"‘Ah, Makepeace, Makepeace!’ (somehow he never liked to be addressed as Willie, Will, Bill, or even William) ‘I am afraid you are not cut out for editing a monthly magazine. You are far too soft-hearted.’

"‘You are quite right, friend. I cannot reject the drivel that is sent me, and I am afraid the magazine is suffering from my good nature.’

"‘How very much better it would be if it were all composed of your own Roundabout Papers and novels!’

"‘It would—undoubtedly it would—but then people might say, *Assez de Bonaparte*.’

"‘That they never can do.’

"‘Glad to hear you say so. By the way, can you lunch with me to-morrow? I am expecting one or two good fellows, such as Gladstone, Carlyle, Newman, Owen, Martineau, and Tennyson. I think you’ll rather like them.’

"‘I’ll be delighted to come.’ And I went."


I call this unselfish dishonesty—in other words turn an honest penny, or rather a good score or two of pence, in those important American periodicals which are so greedy of interesting information—because, while I do not tell the literal truth, I tell stories which are sure to do good to the memory of the more or less simple great ones gone. I frankly admit that it is not nearly so easy to do good to the living as it is to benefit the memory of the dead, although it is much more desirable to accomplish the achievement. Still, it is wonderful what one can do even for the living if one has a sufficient amount of imagination and heart. There are two rules which from my experience, may safely be accounted as final in the matter of unselfish dishonesty. In the first place, where it is at all possible, you must style an author whom you intend to do good to by his Christian name, and by a familiar abbreviation of it where such is at all manageable. Thus, always speak of James, or Jimmie, Payn; Thomas, or Tom, Hardy and William, or Wully, Black. I do not forget Cowper's denunciation of the

Man who hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumps upon your back
How he esteems your merit.

But then Cowper was, as everybody knows, a

absurdly sensitive creature, who was only fit for the society of women and hares. Besides, I have at no time been quite so far left to myself or so very foolish as to slap any eminent personage literally on the back. But it is a totally different thing to slap a man on the back on paper and on the other side of the Atlantic. It can, for example, by no possibility injure Mr. Payn to have it said in the Bowery of New York that "Jimmy Payn said one of his very smartest things after dinner at the table frequented by the 'funny coves' in the Reform Club the other night. Wully Black had remarked to Wattie Besant, Bob Buchanan, and Sam Gould, who were present, that he thought they could not spend the evening better than by going to Johnnie Toole's. Jimmy, who had just lighted his fifteenth cigar, said, 'That would be very much in your line, Wully, my lad. It would be a case of Ultima Toole, eh?'" I frankly admit that there are some men whom I find it not at all easy to be on terms of even paper intimacy with, and to call by their first names. I squirm a little bit even when I allude to Mr. Besant as "Wattie"—though, of course, I am justified by precedent, inasmuch as Scott was so dubbed by Jeffrey, Cockburn, Wilson, and all his intimates. But there is the great author of "Diana of the Crossways" and "The Egoist." How delighted I

should have been—and what a sensation I should have made on the other side of the Atlantic—if I had been able to say this—"I never had a more delightful walk than on last Saturday when I called on my old friend Georgie at his dear little cottage at the back of the Surrey hills. He was in the midst of his new book, which is now appearing in the pages of *The Hebdomal Review*, and he talked with all his usual frankness about his plot and the personages whom he contemplated introducing into it. We walked to the top of Leith Hill, and the dear old lady who looks after Evelyn's Tower gave us a veal-and-ham pie and some tea. How Georgie does tuck in to veal and ham when the chance comes his way, and how he gloats over a cup of really good Assam tea! Barring my old chum Cardinal Newman, who has gone to join the majority—he was 'Cardy' to me in these days—I know nobody to whom tea is in the way of stimulant so decidedly all in all as it is to Georgie!" But in spite of my ardent desire to do Meredith a good turn, I really cannot style him "Georgie" even in New York. He is one of those men who are born to be styled not by their Christian names, or by their surnames simply, but by both. I think of him, dream of him, speak of him, and therefore must write of him, as George Meredith. I



confess, too, that I find a little difficulty in acting as representative for lady novelists. Of course I do act for them. I cannot well help myself, and besides it would savour of selfishness if I did not. Thus, I met dear Mrs. Oliphant the other evening at dinner, and with her usual frankness—at least to so very old and tried a friend as myself—she told me of the literary work she is engaged on at the present time, and consisting mainly of some seventeen novels, which are all running simultaneously in different periodicals. We had, too, some very delightful talk about our old neighbours, the Carlyles. But then, how much more effective such a story would have been in New York, or Boston, or Chicago, if I could have managed to make out that as we were brought up at the same school, or as our parents at one time lived next door to each other, I was entitled to call her “Maggie!” But I cannot do this, and therefore I find it better to say nothing about her than to say “Mrs. Oliphant” every other minute. Then there is the author of “Donovan” and “A Hardy Norseman.” Who is there that does not speak of her and think of her as Edna Lyall? The idea of “Miss” somehow cannot be associated with her. The name seems to invite a sort of brotherly interest. How well a story would go of a long walk at Eastbourne, on the Promenade,

or better still, on Beachy Head—especially if we were discussing the qualities of “We Two”—if I could speak of her when speaking to her as “Edna” or even “Edna dear!” How very well one—and still better two—could indulge in discursive talk about creeds, charities, and crewels under such pleasant conditions! But I cannot do this, and then—although that is but a trifle—the lady’s name is not in reality Edna Lyall at all. I mention little facts of this kind however, merely to show that even unselfish dishonesty is not without its drawbacks.

The second rule of unselfish dishonesty as practised by an author’s representative who knows his business—and it is even more binding than the first—is to enlist the sympathy of one’s constituency for the author whom one specially wishes to befriend. The great soul of the world is not only just—small credit to it for being just—but sympathetic. It likes to have some one to pity; above all things, it likes to shed a tear over great men. If mine were a great line in ambition and not merely the kinchin lay, I should always keep some good ailment or infirmity going. A mysterious disease, which is supposed to be eating away the whole of one’s vitality, and is spoken of with bated breath as being a cancer or something equivalent to it, is about the best thing of

this sort to be encouraged, because there are always a marvellous number of people who will say, "How he bears up under it!" or "What an amount of nerve that fellow must have!" Now, I like to do to others as I should like to be done by, and therefore, when I seek to do good to the authors whose self-elected representative I am, I always enlist the public on their side by alluding to the evils to which their flesh is generally subject. Thus it is that I make a point of allotting to the men whom I am bent on doing good to an illness at least once in two years. I am not quite up to the mark of my rival, who gives Mr. Rudyard Kipling a breakdown once a month, and who never permits Mr. Stevenson to be in decent health for a week at a time. But I don't see why Mr. Meredith—let me say once more that I profoundly regret that I am not in a position to say "George," "Georgie," or even "Geordie"—or Mr. Hardy, or, at all events, Mr. Lecky, or Mr. Froude, should not have a good illness at intervals of the extent I have suggested. A historian in particular ought never to allow a volume of his *magnum opus* to pass without requiring, by order of his physicians, to go abroad, not for the good of his country perhaps, but for the good of his literary constituency. Every member of this branch of the Order of Letters is not

so happily constituted as Gibbon, who, if I remember right, worked off the excitement caused by the completion of "The Decline and Fall" with the help of a walk, or as Grote, whose eminently sensible wife mixed for him a bowl of punch. The nerves of a historian are certain to be unstrung, and his whole system to stand in need of recruiting. So I take advantage of my American field for the display of unselfish dishonesty to inform the world that "Mr. Blank, the eminent historian of Wales, is so exhausted by those researches which culminated in his recent volume, and in his demonstration of the origin of the historical slander that Taffy was a thief, that his medical attendant has peremptorily ordered him off to the Riviera for two months. There he will be shortly joined by his intimate friend, Mr. Dash, the novelist. Mr. Dash is also sadly in need of rest. The delineation of the leading characters in his last novel 'took it decidedly out of him,' as he told me in his stoical, good-humoured way the other day when I met him at the Club, and so he has been compelled to rest for a time." Announcements of this kind invariably help books to go. The constituencies of the circulating libraries rush to the conclusion that they have been "written in the heart's blood" of their authors, and believe that they are much better when placed on

paper in red ink of this kind than otherwise they would be. I used to send my interesting invalids on voyages round the world, but a hint was conveyed to me that this sort of "information" freezes the genial current of the public soul. Authors should not only be ill at stated intervals, but be poor always. Men who can afford voyages round the world, however, are not poor. I took the hint. As a matter of fact, I never get thanks for what I do for authors. But, then, I do not look for rewards of this kind. Besides, the height of unselfish dishonesty is reached when one's left hand does not know what somebody else's right does.

THE ART OF BEING ALONE.

MR. R. L. STEVENSON is, one would say, about as little of a disciple of Wordsworth as there is to be found among the literary men of the time. He is an undisguised worshipper of Villon, and the instincts of Villon are the antipodes to those of Wordsworth. His eerie diabolism seems to be as far removed as anything well can be from the healthy open-air simplicities which are Wordsworth's Lares and Penates, although, if one may speak in Irish fashion, he has placed them on the mountain-tops, to be seen and worshipped of all men and women. On Mr. Stevenson's Alan Brecks and Masters of Ballantrae—his "heroes of hemp and glories of the gallows," who have, nevertheless, managed to escape their proper fate—Calvinism has certainly *not* been able to hold the strong hand of its purity. And yet we are all Wordsworthians when we retire from Mrs. Grundy's Afternoon at Home or the smoking-room of Bohemia to

Mingle with the universe and feel

What we can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

Even Mr. Swinburne, after moving to and fro upon the earth, has returned to sit at the feet of the water-drinking idealist, the chief fault to be found with whom is that he occasionally watered down his own ideals. So it is perhaps not very surprising that Mr. Stevenson in turn should feel that "the world is too much with us," and that, according to popular report, he intends, after paying a farewell visit to this country, to settle finally in his favourite Samoa, with its boundless contiguity of shade—not to speak of hurricanes and earthquakes—and no contiguity at all to civilisation, with its dinners, its receptions, its boxes at the theatre, its everlasting smirk, and its dry champagne.

Ohe! fortunate nimium! Mr. Stevenson is in the happy position of being master of his time and of his public. He is the Rubinstein of fiction. So long as his supreme gift of style does not leave him, so long as he can guarantee a succession of picturesque scoundrels who, though unconventional, always sin in the grand style, it is of no consequence to the customers of Mudie whether he sends his manuscript to his printers from Apia, from a little street off Piccadilly, or from a garden in Dorset. If, too, Mr. Stevenson has been correctly represented by the

interviewers who have made known his intentions for the future conduct of his life and the reasons annexed to them, there is a good deal of common sense in the theory of solitude which he intends to convert into practice. In Samoa the real Stevenson, or at all events the Stevenson of the interviewer's assertions, will not be so liable to interruptions as he will be elsewhere. This is literally true. There is a good deal of cant in the popular talk about being alone in London, about being lost in a crowd. Even in London acquaintances have a trick of descending on one from the clouds, as it were, and then they follow this up by that abomination known as "dropping in of an evening." Even if one has a mechanical smile and a whole vocabulary of "words of course," the bringing of these into action means a waste of time. In a sense, of course, one can be alone in a crowd. But then think of the loss of nervous energy which is involved in the perpetual escaping from being jostled in, or submerged by, the crowd! Depend upon it, a man is most alone when he is literally most alone, and there can be no doubt that Mr. Stevenson will be far less liable to interruption working in a lonely house in a lonely island than he would be in London, where he must, even under the most favourable circumstances, have social and other

distractions. Perhaps M. Zola, between whom and Mr. Stevenson there are some curious points of similarity, although there are very many more points of dissimilarity, could not rub along in Samoa, for he would not have a sufficient supply of human documents. But Mr. Stevenson deals in the superhuman, and still more in the infrahuman, and needs no documents at all. Whoever, indeed, has strength of will and a sufficient stock of cheerfulness to enable him to live alone without giving way to indolence, or allowing serious reflection to degenerate into morbid fancies, has genuine solitude, and the freedom which such genuine solitude alone can give. Alexander Selkirk would have been a greater than Shakespeare if he had been endowed with Shakespeare's brain. He must, indeed, have been a mute inglorious Shakespeare—an embodiment if not of All the Talents, certainly of All the Sanities—or he would have been a raving maniac when he was taken off his island.

If Mr. Stevenson have the courage of the convictions attributed to him, therefore, his are the true science and the perfect art of being alone. Create a solitude without massacring or ruining your fellow-men, and you will unquestionably find in it peace. No doubt post-Adamic humanity cunningly seeks to get rid of its weaknesses by making fetishes of them. But no

worshipping of the tailless monkey will make it the simian ideal. It is all very well to talk of the moral beauty which irradiates a plain face; but when all is said and done, the perfection of female loveliness is the perfection of feature combined with the perfection of contour is, in fact, the answer to Ben Jonson's aspiration

Give me a look, give me a face
That makes simplicity a grace.

Let it be conceded, not perhaps without a sigh, but certainly without demur or doubt or envy, that true and perfect loneliness is to be found where, beyond the strident voices of competitive humanity in populous cities pent, there is peace. But "it is not good for man to be alone." True; yet no great artist whose judgment is equal to his genius is ever altogether dissociated from his fellows. Every man, every woman, is to be found at his or her best when engaged in the performance of duty, and one is most of a brother as well as most of a man when he is doing with all his might whatsoever his hand finds to do. Let Mr. Stevenson produce his masterpiece in Samoa, and his friends as well as his admirers will increase a thousandfold.

They are, however, but a limited few—these modern kings of men in days of representative government and

circulating libraries, these heaven-born novelists with a supreme gift of style who can dictate to the Empire indifferently from Penzance, Kirriemuir, or Apia, and whom the well-to-do classes are always inviting to pot-luck in the toothsome shape of the fatted calf of luxury. Most of us have to rub shoulders, as well as to rub thoughts, with a great number of people every day, even although we may not be so weakly conceited, in consequence, as to lay the flattering unction to our souls that we are men of the world. It is occasionally desirable to be alone; it is always expedient to "keep something to yoursel' ye winna tell to ony"—a moral bank-balance against an intellectual rainy day. How to perform this duty is not so clear, however, as the fact that it ought to be performed. There are so many people who are anxious to penetrate into that *sanctum sanctorum* which contains every man's secret—the hidden springs of his action—and which ought to be regarded as inviolable! Of these the worst is—(here I *do* agree with Cowper)—"the man that hails you Tom or Jack," who has never tried, with Thomas à Kempis to "love all but be familiar with none." He is indubitably a great nuisance. You meet him at some house of an evening; next morning he calls you by your surname, as if you and he had been boys together twenty or thirty years before; he even treats


you to a full measure of that greatest of all social horrors, "chaff." He will insist, too, on talking "shop"; he makes the most minute inquiries into the present financial condition of your "shop," the profits it brings you, the number of "hands" you employ, and so forth. In other words, he takes the most intolerable liberties that can be taken with any business man. It is indeed difficult to keep yourself to yourself while you are in his company, without entrenching yourself behind the palisade of fiction. Such entrenchment would, however, be a violation of that first law of human intercourse which Adam Bede hummed to himself while he worked and dreamed of setting up house with Hetty Sorrel—

In conversation be sincere,
Keep conscience, as the noontide, clear.

It is, indeed, a moot point whether you should tolerate such a bore at all; whether you should not, by the cut direct or the snub brutal, put an end to your association with him once for all. But by so doing you will make an enemy of him, and it is inadvisable to make enemies. The best way to deal with such a man is to follow the advice of that astute old Jesuit, Balthasar Gracian, and find out his weakness—his personal grievance, his invention which has never been, but ought to be, patented, his mode of keeping

corns or weeds in subjection. Then when you meet him, and before he has time to break down the wall of partition which ought to separate you from him, lead him on to talk of his specialty. When you have started him on it, leave him to himself, and let your thoughts wander whithersoever they list—or, better still, whithersoever your will or judgment may guide them. Thus you can kill two birds with one stone. You get rid of a bore, and you get a reputation for being a most agreeable man to meet. “I say, Waldegrave,” said Stalker to me the other day, “how have you managed to hit it off so well with Walkinshaw? He has only seen you twice, and yet he declares that you are the most brilliant conversationalist he ever came across.” Now, my brilliance consisted in listening patiently, and with an occasional interruption, such as “Oh, indeed!” “I see,” “Precisely,” and “You don’t mean to say so!”—eked out with a knowing smile—to Walkinshaw as he discoursed for two mortal hours for two days, in the first instance on the unfair treatment he as an advocate invariably receives at the hands of Lord Fairplay in the Court of Session, and in the second on his invention of a new golf club which under no possible circumstances can top a ball. By letting other people do the talking for you, you get all

the credit of being a model talker, while at the same time you succeed in being quite alone. Of course, every man who desires solitude in the midst of the fuss and fret and inquisitiveness of society must devise his own means of self-defence. But as a rule the safest course is to lead conversation away from the persons composing the company one is in, and indeed from persons altogether, to things and, if possible, ideas outside of one's circle. Religion and politics, according to John Bright, are the only things worth talking about; and, taking the broad view of humanity and of the large problems of Duty and Destiny which environ humanity, John Bright was quite right. But it is only a limited number of people who are capable of talking of the high matters of religion and politics; and besides, in these days of Home Rule and the Disestablishment controversy, both subjects lead to discussion which is, to say the least of it, likely to be heated. Speaking generally, it is better to turn conversation to something lighter, such as the housing of the poor, or the extraordinary character of the weather, or the latest piece at the theatre. But anything whatever outside of oneself, which at the same time, even if it does not, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, make for righteousness, does not make for mischief in the shape of malignant gossip, is better than one's own



puny personality as a topic of conversation, and serves as a defence to that personality as well. Thus, after a fashion, one may be alone in the midst of company, of pleasure, and even of business. But let no one lay the flattering unction to his soul that this is perfect, free, unconditioned solitude. That can only be secured by Stevensonian means, which not one in ten thousand can command.

A MODERN MINISTER'S MODERN CURS

PROLOGUE.

A WILD, windy night on the last of the wild hea that the advance of civilisation and the congestion population in Scotland have left in the bleak district in Argyllshire. In the last of the but-and-b sat the last of the old Dames—Auld Elsp M'Taggart, aged ninety-five—wearing the last the mutches, and looking into the last of the p fires. Auld Elspeth was restless. She rose. & went to her window—it was the last of the boles and peered out into the wild night. Alas! it v not the last of such nights. She went to the d —it was provided with the last of the snecks—s listened. She heard nothing. She muttered, must be going mad—I beg paurdon, I maun be ga clean gyte.” Elspeth hobbled up to the last of chests of drawers and took from the top of it neat little tract labelled “Braid Scots for the d

By order of the School Board." She read it eagerly. She then took a sip from a bottle marked "Two ounces of alcohol for the day. By order of the Sumptuary Committee." "I feel a wee thing mair like mysel' noo. But for ae thing, auld as I am, I could flype a stockin', whummle a poet, or set up a bougar wi' the youngest o' them. If only my darling chinchilla—I beg paurdon again, my auld, grey Poussie Baudrons—were here! Talkin' o' poets, I wish I cud express my feelings in the style o' thae modern men that are a' the rage noo—thae Watsons and Henleys and Kiplings and Le Galliennes. So, as no member of the Board is present, and as my stock of Braid Scots is running dry, I must just fall back on poor old forgotten Alfred Tennyson—

‘She only said the night is dreary;
He cometh not, she said.’”

Elsbeth rocked her head as she lay back in the oldest and last of the old armchairs. "Yes, he cometh not. They have given him a bad character. He is a murderer; he likes tame rabbits and white mice. He is a flirt; he serenades Chloe and Phyllis and Amaryllis with the same monstrous melody. He is a poacher, catches weasels asleep, and eats 'em. His bawls are more gruesome than a French realistic novel. These things may be. But I care not. He

has been my companion for twenty years, and I love him—my Meredith—I love him, I love him ! ”

While the Dame was sobbing her heart out, a number of men, well mackintoshed and under umbrellas, had assembled outside her door. In their midst they bore, and (it was in the end of a very modern July) had borne, 'mid snow and ice, a litter having on it a dead body, covered with a cloak. The crowd was headed by the chairman of the School Board and the president of the Sumptuary Committee. These functionaries consulted anxiously together as to the most effectual means of breaking the terrible news to Auld Elspeth. At last they agreed that the best course would be for the members of the Local Classical Musical Society, who were present, to strike up a Tennysonian lullaby. They consented, although it was a great sacrifice on their part, as by this time Tennyson was forgotten, and even Verdi and Mascagni were accounted old-fashioned. So it was that the strains of “Home they brought her warrior dead” floated into the hut. Auld Elspeth acted as became the last of the tribe of Meg Merrilees. Shrieking, “I knew it,” she rushed to the door and lifted the last of the snecks. Full mournfully and slow the messengers of woe entered bearing the litter. Elspeth uncovered the corse,

seized it in her arms, exclaimed, "And is this the last of thee, Meredith, my own Meredith?" and threw herself, still clutching it, into the armchair once more. All present wept for the space of five minutes. It was the Age of Natural Emotion. When a fly was drowned, the nation went into mourning for a week. At the end of the five minutes Elspeth again rose. Having wrapped the remains of Meredith in a shawl, she dashed the day's instalment of Braid Scots in the face of the chairman of the School Board, exclaiming, "Thy 'flypes' and 'whummles,' and 'bougars' perish with thee!" He did not perish. He only exclaimed, "Mad, poor thing, mad!" She then seized the two-ounce bottle and forced the remainder of its contents down the throat of the president of the Sumptuary Committee. He made no complaint. At the moment he would have done a good deal to oblige Elspeth. Besides, he had not been offered an eke for a quarter of a century. Then in a terrible voice she cried, "Who hath done this thing?" By "this thing" she meant the murder of Meredith. For it was evident, from the shapeless mass which was all that remained of his once noble features, that he had been done to death with stones. None present could tell.

Crowner's 'Quest Law was now, thanks to a special statute, all the rage in Scotland; it had been imported

from England. An inquest was held on the body of Meredith, and the usual unsatisfactory verdict was returned—"Death at the hands of some person or persons unknown." After the verdict had been given, Elspeth rose in the court and uttered a terrible curse against the murderer; it was the last and worst uttered even in Scotland. It was so bad that—apart altogether from its length—it cannot be reproduced here. Condensed, it came to a prophecy that the murder would be out some day, and that the murderer would out with it himself.


Elspeth lived fifteen years longer. This was due to a large extent to some one presenting her with a cat which was the image of Meredith. It was sent *anonymously* by parcel post. She never discovered the sender. She never withdrew the curse, but held on like an Australian bank depositor. She progressed so far in Braid Scots that she was able before her death to understand Burns with the help of a good glossary.

CHAPTER I.

Mrs. Arthur Wardour sat in her boudoir knitting—chiefly, however, brows. She was not absolutely happy. Yet she ought to have been. So at least

said her gossips, and as they included all the ladies of her husband's congregation, one might reasonably have expected accurate information as well as wisdom from such a crowd. She ought to have been extra happy that day instead of the other way about, for Mr. Wardour had been made a D.D., and the ladies of the congregation were all agreed that his Doctor's hood was so nice and quite the colour of his hair, in other words, old gold. She was now, therefore, Mrs. Dr. Wardour, and ought to have reached the summit—or, at any rate, what the late Laureate would have accounted the Beattock Summit—of her ambition. He had no vices, of course; he had not even any habits to speak of. He did not smoke; he did not drink; he did not bicycle; he never went out to dinner; he ate salmon when it was cheap. Then the Wardours had a fairly large family—one son and ten daughters—and were not distressingly rich. Their lines (they were like most folks in Scotland, All-Round Presbyterians by creed) were cast in Carricktown, which, as all the world knows, is a country town of the smaller sort that is fortunately not growing at all. The pecuniary relations between Dr. Wardour and his congregation were of a thoroughly satisfactory character, being settled on a basis which cannot be better described

than that of a sliding scale tempered by cordiality. When trade was in its normal state, the Wardours had £300 a year. According to fluctuations in that trade, their stipend might rise to £400 or fall to £200. But by special request of Dr. Wardour himself it never rose above the largest of these sums. Even in bad years, all that Dr. (he was then Mr.) Wardour had to do when his wife wished a stair-carpet, or a new piano, or a wing to the nursery—which last request was a tolerably frequent one—was to mention the fact to his congregation just before it dispersed on the conclusion of the forenoon service. The members who were not for the time being affected by the dullness in trade—but no others, of course—subscribed the necessary amount. But at this time—the Return to Nature, which was one of the most notable features of the twentieth century, was now in full swing—ministers and hearers were on terms of the closest and, indeed, tenderest intimacy. Thus, if Mr. Wardour was troubled with a cough of a Sunday morning when he began his sermon, he was sure to explain beforehand how and where it had begun to affect him, and to say—if, of course, such a statement could be based on fact—that it had no connection with the influenza, which, in these days, made its appearance once in five years, and with the punctu-



ality of the North-Caledonian-South-Highland trains of the period. On the other hand, it was quite open to a member of the congregation, at a meeting held for the discussion of church matters, to ask some such delicate question of the minister as how he came by his bloodshot eyes, and if the report were true that he had presented his wife with a set of sables. As full and lucid explanations were invariably forthcoming, gossip was totally unknown within the confines of Carricktown All-Round Presbyterian Congregation.

But though, in the opinion of her intimates, Mrs. Wardour ought to have been exceptionally happy, as a matter of fact she was the reverse. It was not that she had fallen in love with one of her husband's deacons or with a strange minister, or that he had fallen in love with any of his deacons' wives or with any strange woman. They were on the verge of celebrating their silver wedding, and if either had ever cherished any fancies which did not concern the other, these had vanished before the magical influence of time and constant association. She could not conceive that he had ever loved anyone but herself. They had been brought up in the same village, and had indeed been engaged to each other at the age of seven. Then she was quite certain that her husband had no financial vexations, that he had never broken the

bank at Monte Carlo, and that he was not a shareholder in all the Banks in the colonies of the United Kingdom which yet belonged to the British Empire. Nevertheless there was something that was wrong, and that had been wrong during the bulk of her married life. Dr. Wardour—Mrs. Wardour always thought of her husband as a Presbyterian All-Round dignitary precisely as she spoke of him to the ladies of the congregation, and to the servants she had when the state of trade permitted—of him who muttered in his sleep and was afflicted with troublesome dreams. Not infrequently, too, he was moody and depressed. When she put her hand tenderly through his hyacinthine locks, and asked him if there was anything on his mind, he invariably answered with equal tenderness, "Nothing, darling." As she had asked this question on an average a thousand times a year during the past fifteen years, she shuddered when she reflected that Mr. (now Dr.) Wardour must have told 15,000 fictions—she could not think of them brutally as lies—during this time. And yet he was in all other respects, the soul of rectitude.

An odd circumstance—or at least what in our less way we call an odd circumstance—had added that day to Mrs. Wardour's distress, and had virtually forced her to come to the conclusion that something

must be done at once to penetrate and reveal to the public the secret which bore her down. She tried to do as much reading as the cares of a large family and the want of a servant when trade was depressed would permit. She even occasionally read novels in accordance with an arrangement which, though not enforced by legislation, prevailed in the country at this time, and in virtue of which people perused history, travel, biography, poetry, criticism, and fiction as mood suggested or state of health demanded. But, of course, owing to her multifarious duties, Mrs. Wardour's reading was both behind date and desultory. It was not surprising, therefore, that not before that period had she read "The Scarlet Letter" and "The Silence of Dean Maitland," and that she had read them about the same period. They had produced a marvellous effect upon her. Here were two clergymen attaining high distinction of various kinds, and yet concealing a great sin. Why should not a third do the same thing? The very fact that Mr.—she mentally begged his pardon, Dr.—Wardour had received a degree as D.D. placed him in the position of Dean Maitland. The others were forced to tell the truth; why not he? The result might—nay, would—be public exposure. But, although she loved Dr. Wardour most devotedly, she loved truth more. But how to

bring Dr. Wardour up to what used very vulgarly to be known as the scratch? She reflected for five minutes. She glanced at "The Scarlet Letter" and "The Silence of Dean Maitland." She compressed her lips. She had made up her mind.

CHAPTER II.

Dr. Wardour sat in his study. The room was a nursery during five hours of the day, and a study during two, but out of respect for its oldest though not most frequent occupant, it was invariably termed the study. The paper of the room was green, yet—such is the terrible irony of fate—he was in a brown study. He was surrounded, as indeed he always was, with books and cats. Everybody understood why he should have books; it was a fashion with ministers at the time. But nobody understood why he should be fond of cats—not even Mrs. Wardour, although she hazarded the suggestion that they had a sort of inspiring effect upon him. Two things were especially notable about the cats. They were all chinchillas, and thanks to Dr. Wardour's magnetic influence, they lived at peace with each other, and with all worlds generally, except those of mice, rats, and rabbits. He had named two of them Bruce

and Macaskill, after his favourite theologians. They were greatly attached to each other, hunted rats and rabbits in company, and drank milk out of the same platter. It was very touching to see Bruce bowing to Macaskill and hear him purring out like a French marquis of the Old Régime: "After you, my dear." Then, though there was Murdo in Macaskill's name, there was no murder in his eye or claw. Dr. Wardour befriended all the cats that adhered to his congregation. He was opposed to the drowning of kittens. He had been instrumental in establishing a syndicate for their exportation in large numbers to Thessaly, Eskdale, and the other vole countries. Singularly enough, while his toleration for cats was unlimited, his toleration for mice was *nil*. This only proved, however, that, like everybody except Mr. Gladstone, Dr. Wardour had his limitations.

Although the Doctor was in a brown study, his looks and his thoughts were of the blackest. He groaned, he massaged his brow, he exclaimed, "I cannot bear this burden any longer. I must speak out! I must make my atonement!"

The door opened gently. Mrs. Wardour entered with a tray, on which were a cup of tea and two books. Mrs. Wardour passed her hands lovingly through his hair, and said: "After such an exciting

day, darling, rest as much as you can. Here are two nice books for you." She looked at him anxiously and left the room.

Carelessly he looked at the two books. They were "The Scarlet Letter" and "The Silence of De Maitland." The tea had refreshed him, and from glancing he began to read. He read feverishly. He read far into the night. Like Mrs. Wardour, he went to bed resolved.

CHAPTER III.

Four days later. It was the annual meeting of the Presbyterian All-Round Church. There was quite a crowd in attendance. Its members were attracted by the first item in the *agenda* paper—"Personal Statement by Dr. Wardour." Dr. Wardour was there to the minute—indeed before it. He was pale and resolved. So was Mrs. Wardour. The Chairman struck a hammer on the table and said, "Order for Dr. Wardour!" Dr. Wardour came to the table, and—these were times when there was no beating about the bush—said at once: "Friends, I won't detain you above a few seconds. I am the hitherto undiscovered murderer of Auld Elspeth's chinchilla cat. It had, when I was

a little boy, eaten two of my tame white rabbits, and I stoned it to death. I am under Elspeth's curse. Tell me how to get rid of it. Shall I resign my charge and stand for the whole of a bitter July night on a moor, to be stoned by schoolboys or scratched by cats?"

This statement was received with cries of "Most disappointing!" "Is that all?" "Not worth mentioning," and "Pass on to the next business." The Chairman was equal to the occasion. "Would you be good enough to stand up, Dr. Wardour?" Dr. Wardour stood up. "Ladies and gentlemen, you see the central wrinkle on Dr. Wardour's forehead. All of you will please shut the right eye and concentrate the left on the wrinkle for exactly ten seconds. If, at the end of the ten seconds, anyone of you can say honestly 'I see the figure of a murdered cat on Dr. Wardour's forehead,' the verdict will be murder. If not, it will be justifiable felicide." The verdict *was* justifiable felicide. The Chairman then moved as the finding of the congregation that, trade having revived and Australian Banks being all reconstructed, Dr. Wardour be condemned to have his salary raised to £500 a year.

The Wardours were united as they had never been. Yet they felt rather dull that night, as they sat in

the big study armchair together. "Not at a melodramatic close, is it, dearest?" said Dr. Ward. "Quite the reverse, darling; very prosaic. Somehow—and here Mrs. Wardour sighed—"our story is like one without an Epilogue." And it is.

SO DREADFULLY VULGAR.

IT was with this characterisation of the works of Charles Dickens that I induced my Modern Spartan to come out of the shell of his Reserve Force and indulge in a few minutes' discursive talk on literature and literary men. I ran him to earth last week at his favourite resort of St. Regulus-by-the-Sea. I have often in the past made way for him on the links or on the street—it is impossible to associate the coarsely familiar action of rubbing shoulders with a Modern Spartan—but I never lived in the same hotel with him till last week, and, therefore, never had an opportunity of making inferences as to his character from his habits. But I had a presentiment that I should come across him at St. Regulus-by-the-Sea. For, of course, he is a Type rather than an individual, and one can always make calculations as to Types. My particular calculation in this case was that he would keep his Whitsuntide holiday till after the ordinary Whitsuntide crowd had had its turn, and

that he would spend it at St. Regulus-by-the-
 The place and the game of which it is the headquar
 have an almost irresistible attraction for the Mod
 Spartan. He is an Englishman, and St. Regulu
 the meeting-place for Scotsmen and Englishm
 Although he himself has been in the army l
 enough to have learned the art of perfect perso
 grooming, and although his little property down
 Devon enables him to live and travel comfortably
 a bachelor, he is the grandson of an archdeacon;
 the cathedral air of St. Regulus suits his tas
 Essentially a serious man, the game of golf, as play
 in St. Regulus with Addisonian propriety, is after
 own heart.

In solemn silence all
 Drive on the good red gutty ball.

Besides, your Modern Spartan is incomplete witho
 the contrast exhibited to him and to his advantage
 the Modern Helot. And the true Modern Helot is t
 St. Regulus caddie of the old and possibly decayi
 school, as he proceeds by the side of his employ
 weather-browned, ragged, last night's saturnalia
 cheap whisky still throbbing in his head. T
 Modern Spartan has too much good taste, and besid
 is too much of a connoisseur in the minor morals,
 make a Flagrant Example of the Modern Helot. B

the Modern Helot, although he too will doubtless be improved off the face of the earth, is quite equal to the task of making a Flagrant Example of himself in the cool of the evening, when his day's stalking is over, and with the aid of his employer's florins.

I judge the folks one stumbles upon in hotels by the books they forget to take from the drawing-room into their private rooms after breakfast. When I arrived at St. Regulus about noon the landlord of the Cardinal Beaton made contentment thrill my spinal cord by informing me that "the place was quite deserted," and that there were only three people in the hotel, a widow lady and her daughter, and a gentleman. I ordered lunch, and sauntered into the drawing-room. There I saw on a couch a cookery book, with knitting materials atop, a cheap copy of "David Copperfield" upon a chair, and on the mantelpiece Mr. Charles Pearson's "National Life and Character." I looked at the cookery book. It was modern, and contained recipes for "families of limited means." I inferred from this that the widow was pale and anxious-looking, and had streaks of grey in her hair, that she had "correct" tastes, and that she had some means, although she "had not been left nearly so well as had been expected." There was a book-mark in the cheap "David Copperfield"

at the end of the chapter which related the death of Dora. The daughter, I concluded, was sleepy-headed, fair-haired, rather too rosy-cheeked, Venus-of-Milowaisted, and good-natured. Her mother would have liked her to try some of the many employments now open to women. But she would shrink from anything of the kind, simply because Nature had meant her for quiet domesticity and marriage with a very fat young man with a thick head of hair, whose goodness was separated from milk-soppiness by the thinnest of partitions. Then I went to the mantelpiece, and took up "National Life and Character." I was curious to see it, although, as I had been informed that it was the modern manual of modern pessimism, I had no wish for its possession. I turned over the pages till I came to one on whose margin there was a faint pencil-mark. There I read, "Our morality will be the emasculate tenderness of those who shrink from violence, not because it is a transgression of order, but because it is noisy and coarse, and, having outlived strong passions, and the energy by which will translates itself into act, we shall plume ourselves on having abolished vice. Our intellectual discipline will be derived from the year-book and the review, and our intellectual pleasure from the French novel. Yet there seems no reason why men of this

kind should not perpetuate the race, increasing and multiplying, till every rood of earth maintains its man, and the savour of vacant lives will go up to God from every home." I closed the book with satisfaction and with the prediction—"The Modern Spartan—his mark."

I was not in error. We all met at *table d'hôte* dinner that night, and, owing to the limited company, at the same table. My companions turned out very much as I expected—the mother a little less anxious and pallid, the daughter a trifle less expansive of waist, than my fancy had painted. My Modern Spartan, however, came absolutely up to my expectations. I gloated over him. He was perhaps a quarter of an inch above the middle height, absolutely erect, perfectly well proportioned, without an inch of superfluous fat, yet quite easy in his carriage. He was neatly—nay, elegantly—bald, with an edging of grey to his dark fringe of hair, which gave it a sort of piquancy; his face wore the brown of health, not of excessive application to athletic exercise; the cut of his clothes was fashionable without being ultra-dudish, and suggested the country gentleman even more than the retired military man; his general appearance was that of fifty in a thorough state of preservation; his voice (when he said "Thanks") was

firm and low. He at once established a silent and very uncomfortable moral dictatorship over the rest of us, and that in virtue not of any affected superiority or self-assertion on his part, but simply of his superior finish as a human being. His first action was characteristic. A bottle of claret, half full, was planted before him by the waiter. The cork had evidently been placed in it hurriedly by that over-driven functionary the previous night. It was tilted with vulgar rakishness to one side. My Modern Spartan said nothing, of course, nor did he show signs of discomfort of any kind, but I am quite certain that this cork brought before him a vision, which would have been distressing had he not been a Spartan, of some wretched 'Arry in all his Bank 'Oliday glory on 'Ampstead 'Eath. He uncorked the bottle, poured out three-fourths of a glass, which, with water, was all that he drank in the course of dinner, and then corked the bottle again finally and tastefully. He did not look round him when sitting at table. But I have no doubt that he took us all in, that he did not approve of the bottle of ginger beer which mother and daughter divided between them, and that he regarded my glass of cold water as a sign of moral or physical weakness. We all breathed freely, I am ashamed to say, when he left table to

smoke a cigarette, as we subsequently ascertained, and take a final evening saunter. Mother and daughter burst out into feminine commonplaces, and even began to exchange conversational trivialities with me. Three days passed, and I got no nearer my Modern Spartan, though I sometimes saw him on the links playing a fair game without strain or stress, in the company of Reserve Forces of the same nationality as himself. On the afternoon of the fourth day, and about an hour before dinner, my opportunity came. I strolled up to the circulating library, intending to ask for a novel by Mr. Norris, in the belief that somehow the fact of my being seen with such a book in my possession would establish a sort of connection between me and the Modern Spartan. In the shop I found him with Mr. Pearson's "National Life and Character" in his hand. Obviously he was about to exchange it for something else. A happy thought struck me. I asked the librarian for "National Life and Character." He was about to say that it was out at the time, when the Modern Spartan, who, I knew instinctively, was the soul of courtesy, stepped forward with "Here it is." We then could not help recognising in words the fact that we were in the habit of dining together. In short, we walked together back to the hotel,

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talking literature, links, and weather, then links, weather, and literature, and finally weather, literature, and links. We had still a few minutes to spend in the drawing-room. The Daughter—we now thought of the Daughter and the Mother, and even of Each Other, in large capitals, and as Types rather than as Persons—had again left the cheap copy of "David Copperfield" on a couch. I took it up lightly, threw it down lightly, and exclaimed, "When one thinks of the great natural genius possessed by Dickens, is it not a great pity that he was So Dreadfully Vulgar?" My arrow went straight to its mark. A flush of something almost like enthusiasm mounted into the Modern Spartan's face, and for half a minute he was positively voluble. He quite agreed with me. Dickens had perhaps as much natural genius as any author. But he was deliberately, incurably vulgar, not so much in his style as in both his views and his sketches. What could be more Dreadfully Vulgar than the brandy-drinking in "Pickwick," the Bumble humour in "Oliver Twist," Mark Tapley's jollity in "Martin Chuzzlewit," the love-making in "Little Dorrit," the Quilp-Brass-Swiveller orgies in "The Old Curiosity Shop," Carker's everlasting teeth in "Dombey and Son," and Bitzer's caricature of Benthamism in "Hard

Times"? Dickens nowadays is only for people who dress loudly, eat shrimps, drink bottled stout, are happy on switchback railways, and hum music-hall airs. I glanced at "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," which he had in his hand, and had brought from the library. "Do you think," I asked, "that Hardy is the antipodes to Dickens?"

"By no means. I am reading 'Tess' for the second time. It does not gain upon me. Hardy aims at the very opposite of vulgarity, I admit. But there is something akin to vulgarity in some of his overdone descriptive passages, and there is a want of genuine gentlemanliness in his thrusting 'Tess forward so ostentatiously in his preface and title-page as a pure woman."

I had succeeded in opening the Fountains of the Great Deep—if, indeed, it is not Dreadfully Vulgar so to describe such an Ideal Reservoir as the Modern Spartan. I left the hotel three days after the deliverance on Dickens, and I left him in it. Perhaps he is there still. I should not think this likely, however. I am under the impression that the Daughter—not the Mother—must have proved too much for him. They were joined the evening of our first talk by a male creature who was unspeakable, and made the Daughter blush and giggle at dinner in

spite of the Modern Spartan. I whispered to him "The Daughter's Young Man." He shuddered. Strolling that evening on the links we came upon them. The Young Man had his arm round the Daughter's waist. It was So Dreadfully Vulgar. The Young Man left early the following morning. But after that the Daughter must have been to much for the Modern Spartan, as his function in life was to be a protest against So Dreadfully Vulgar. I studied him for three days, and mastered him—as Type. I felt no curiosity about him as a man. I did not inquire of the hotel people what was the name of my acquaintance. It might have been Smith, and then—though that, of course, would have been no fault of his—I should have been rather disappointed. I made certain, however, that he was meant to remain unmarried, and that he was in possession, not of wealth, but of a competence. Love, he said, was ideal, but the results of marriage—the nursery, the squalling baby, the monthly nurse, the feeding bottle, the "eysy-pysy"—were So Dreadfully Vulgar. "Neither poverty nor riches" was commendable; but wealth, with its material delights, its show, its vanity, its crushing, its selfishness, its fuss was So Dreadfully Vulgar. I touched on Pearson and hinted at the view of life that I had found.

the passage I had read as being sound. He gave his shoulders an ideal shrug. "There is good in Pearson. He is a Stoic and a Sceptic, and seems to think that what the world calls Progress is but movement in a circle. After all, Stoicism and Scepticism, though they may be both wide of the mark and far from the truth, are always dissociated from vulgarity. But even Pearson occasionally plays, not, perhaps, to the gallery, but to the pit-stalls, as when he says, 'our intellectual discipline will be derived from the year-book and the review, and our intellectual pleasure from the French novel.' The pit-stalls folk never read year-books, and know only French novels as things with yellow backs and full of moral rottenness, to be avoided." I sounded him on politics. "I agree with Balfour. We are governed by rhetoric, and rhetoric is So Dreadfully Vulgar. I like Balfour. He is a protest against vulgarity. But will he hold out, or will he too be submerged by the tide of democracy?" Journalism? "I fear it is going all to scraps and scandal—in the meantime." Humour? He shuddered again. "Worse than vulgar! with its shameless puns, parodies, and burlesques, its adoration of the coster and of the facial contortionist, it is becoming positively coarse." I sounded the Modern Spartan about a thousand other things, and I


ascertained that loud laughter, ham sandwiches, explosions of sentimentality, veal-and-ham pies, gregarious philanthropy, meat teas, huge donations for educational purposes, onions, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot," magnums of champagne, three out of every four of the toasts at a public dinner, blazers, social evenings, sausages, life in a boarding-house, and kidneys on toast, all come within the category of So Dreadfully Vulgar. Life generally, as it is lived nowadays, is So Dreadfully Vulgar. Death alone is not and never can be Vulgar. And the Modern Spartan here muttered with the greatest of the Roman Emperors—and so muttering showed that he too is not devoid of faith—"To go away from among men, if there are Gods, is not a thing to be afraid of; but if, indeed, they do not exist, or if they have no concern about human affairs, what is it to me to live in a universe devoid of Gods or devoid of Providence?"

I regret to say that before I parted with the Modern Spartan I had rather fallen in his estimation. The afternoon of my last day in St. Regulus he and I had a deliciously silent round of the links. But driving off the tee at the last hole, I unaccountably missed the globe. The *genius loci* inspired me to burst out into "God bless my soul!" The Modern

Spartan looked at me and through me. He knew the exclamation was not my own. I was an imitator. I might be an impostor, a literary detective who had taken him in. He shook me by the hand, indeed, when we parted next morning. But he expressed no wish that we should meet again. Yet I like and respect him. I hope he will pursue his mission of living long and wisely, and of making intelligent, pessimistic, but not useless remarks. Under other auspices, he might have been a soldier-hero, an ecclesiastical politician governing a nation by the power of pure reason, or at least an anchorite living on roots and ecstasy. But he is certain to have an influence on the future. He cannot prevent the inevitable and desirable Return to Nature. He cannot prevent a second Dickens from enthroning Laughter-holding-both-its-sides in the Circulating Library. But, thanks to the Modern Spartan, that Laughter will not be associated with pipes, jorums of brandy and water, unkempt hair, and slippers down at heel.

HOW I MADE MY REPUTATION.

It was exactly yesterday a year ago that I quite understood all about it, and how successfully I had done it. I was sitting in the select smoking-room of the Crack-up-all-round Club. I am a member of the Lo-Grolla myself, but our premises were being overhauled, and in consequence we were the guests of the Crack-up-all-rounders, when my warmest friend and best advertiser, Plagiary Bloodybones, came up to me with a face purple with laughter, slapped me on the back, shook both my hands, and burst out "Best thing you ever did, my boy ; best thing you ever did !" I looked up in genuine surprise, and asked "Which thing ?" I was not quite certain that my good friend Plagiary was sincere in his eulogistic adjectives. It is part of my duty to praise his romances in the *Parthenon*, the *Poetaster*, and the *Afternoon Snooze*. Thus only a week ago I said of his latest book, which is almost as full of skulls as is the crypt in Hythe or Christchurch, that "it marked a new departure in



fiction, that in future, and in presence of Mr. Plagiary Bloodybones, Scott, Dumas, and Hugo must hide their diminished heads." Bloodybones was, in his turn, remarkably good to me. He said recently that "Since Fielding moved the great heart of England to laughter and to tears by his rich realism of style, which was a marvellous compound of Shakespeare and potboy, no master of the pathetic and the humorous had appeared at all comparable to"—myself. I was unable to understand how Fielding moved the great heart of anybody to tears, or how a style could be a combination of Shakespeare and potboy. But then I did not see my way to criticise a past master of English like Bloodybones, especially when he further went on to say that "before my sunny laughter, which recalled dance and Provençal song and sunburnt mirth, and my tears that welled through all my fancy like the sweet, delicious, short-lived griefs of childhood's rain-and-sunshine hour, or like a fountain on the enraptured gaze of a horde of desperate, distraught Dervishes carrying the drooping flag of Islam from Khartoum to Cairo, and eating all before them like the rats that in romantic rose-crowned Rhineland picked the bones of Bishop Hatto—before that laughter and these tears the cackling cachinnations, the grotesque gigglings, the strained

and stertorous sentiment, and the mist of mawkish and muddled moonshine, that have made the reputation of Dickens a scandal to British intelligence, and disappear into the lugubrious limbo of oleaginous oblivion."

So I put at first little stock by the panegyrics the "best thing you have ever done, my boy," on which Plagiary kept addressing to me as, having taken my arm, he dragged me to the reading-room. I regarded them as to a certain extent payment in advance for my next eulogium of his next roman. But when he brought up to me the *Cosmopolitan Miscellany*, and turned to my little sketch of "The Pew-Opener's Idyll," I saw that he was shaking with genuine delight. There was certainly no doubt whatever about the heartiness of the guffaw with which having found the sentence he was in quest of, he pointed it out to me, and said, triumphantly, "That you are, my boy." I read "Gladys discussed the matutinal bloater like a deceased wife's sister." Of course I laughed, modestly, like the unpretending man I am, merely to show that in spite of protestations to the contrary, I enjoyed the humour of the sentence as well as did Plagiary. But, in truth, being a busy man, I had forgotten all about "The Pew-Opener's Idyll," and had not the faintest recollect

of how Gladys, although (see Bloodybones' critique) one of the most remarkable of recent additions to the gallery of female loveliness, took breakfast of a morning. No doubt, when I was engaged in telling her story—at two guineas a page—I had been reading in the newspaper the thousandth and first discussion of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill in the House of Lords. Being pushed for time and ideas, I hurriedly put two and two together in the fashion which had so fascinated Bloodybones. He then went on to point out to me the beauties of my own conceit. "A deceased wife's sister, who has played her cards properly, who has been a mother to the lost darling's little pets, and has seen to it that the slippers of the lost darling's husband are properly warmed against his return from the City, and that his hot water of a morning is not lukewarm, feels herself in nearly as strong a position as the deceased wife herself—of course, before her decease. She knows what is coming. 'I think it is time I should leave you, dear John; I am needed at home. But you'll allow me to come occasionally and see the precious little ones. I should not like them to forget me quite. You will allow me, won't you dear, dearest John?' Then 'I cannot part with you, Julia. You have become a part of my life. Remain with me,

darling: be my wife and the mother of my children. I am quite positive that my lost love, now in heaven, blesses this union. Before her sweet spirit took wing she whispered to me her hope that you, and you only' (here the head of the deceased wife's sister should fall lightly on the shoulder—the right, not the left—of the lost darling's husband), 'would occupy this vacant place.' Now, a woman who is quite as sure that this sort of thing will happen as that the fishmonger will send in his bill, does not eat her bloater like a guest who, whatever she may be thinking, is sure to say, 'You have helped me far too largely,' but like a hostess, who knows to a decimal fraction what a bloater costs, and, therefore, eats every fibre of it. Now, your Gladys, my boy, though she was not in the position of a hostess expectant, became engaged the night before to the hostess's son. She felt, therefore, as if she had a right to the house and all that is in it, bloaters not excluded. Besides, having got engaged, she had a good appetite. Quite a Shakespearian bit of condensed thinking, I assure you, my boy. Go on like that and your fortune will be made in no time."

I said nothing at the moment because, not to mention other reasons, I had nothing to say. But I did go on, and my fortune is now in a fair way of being made. To tell the truth nothing is easier than to get

up a reputation as a New Humorist. In fact if one wishes to make a reputation of this kind one must go about it in an easy fashion. You must not hunt for humour too much; you must of course make an effect in the way of a surprise, but you must not strain after it. I dare not reveal too many of the tricks of my trade, for then my own occupation would be gone. But I may confess to two devices in which I have some faith. The one is to get hold of a good grave phrase and give it a comic turn. Nothing is simpler. I heard yesterday that the Club had been in fits ever since, in my last three volumes in which I told the story of an unfortunate lady with a dissipated officer for a husband, I made the statement, "Home they brought her warrior dead drunk." One of the members of the Club, who delivers discourses on rhetoric to literary societies, told me that he had made a good use of it in his Lecture on the Sublime and the Beautiful, and the ease with which a transition can be made from the one to the other. What could be more tragically sublime than Tennyson's picture—the tearless wife deprived in a moment of what she loved most, the trembling of the mind on the verge of insanity, the appearance of the child and the triumph of love and tears over the mental peril! Then look on this

picture and on this. What could be more ridiculous than the spectacle of the inebriated officer being brought home by two companions a trifle more sober than himself, the apologetic "Captain's a little overcome, ma'am; not often taken this way," the wife's "Disgusting!" and "I'll go to mamma to-morrow morning;" the husband's "Lorbleesmer; losht lashkey in crush Eshter Hall, 'pon m'honour, dear. Egstronary shircumshtansh," and then the

Sermons and soda water the day after !

And yet how easy it is to pass from the one to the other! One simple word does it. Precisely so; one word did it. And my *modus operandi* is to get hold first of a serious quotation, and then use the simple word that will give it the necessary comic twist.


I make most capital, however, of surprises, such as Gladys eating her bloater like a deceased wife's sister, or "He looks eggs and bacon in the face of a morning like a man and the father of a family." A young lady who honours me with her admiration—as a New Humorist, not as a man—complimented me greatly on this a few evenings ago. She said there was so much good sense and subtle knowledge of the world in it. The head of a family eats unselfishly; he eats eggs and bacon, not because he likes them or is hungry,

but because it is his duty to his family to eat them. The more eggs and bacon he eats, the more happiness he is able to bring his loved ones through the increased strength that they endow him with. Thus selfishness is swallowed up—literally—of unselfishness, and a halo of moral sublimity encircles the breakfast roll. It is quite true that I never thought of all this when I made my hit. That is no business of mine, however. My concern is to make jokes and get paid for them. It is for my public to discover their subtlety. It gives them a pleasure to do this; and then I am not a penny the worse; on the contrary I am a large number of pounds the better.

But the natural evolution of one of my best jokes will illustrate my art more clearly than any amount of direct explanation. I understand that Scotland has been convulsed by "Theophrastus blew his nose like a sheriff-clerk depute in a small-debt court." It has told better than even "He sipped his tea like a bank teller," and "Algernon looked at the claret in his glass critically, like the proprietor of a half-crown monthly magazine *en route* for the Eiffel Tower." I have had oceans of letters from folks in all parts of Scotland who know the particular sheriff-clerk depute and the particular small-debt court in which he blows his nose. I

gather from my informants that he blows it in a hundred different courts at the same time, that he blows it all day long, and that he blows it in a thousand ways. Sometimes it seems, he pulls his handkerchief out hurriedly and applies it externally, as if he considered it a waste of precious time to blow one's nose at all. More frequently I gather, he takes it out deliberately, makes a mushroom tableland of it, like Sir Charles Russell when he is going to demolish Sir Richard Webster, and then attends to it seriously, like a Queen's prizeman *in posse* when he prepares to make a final bull and *not* a magpie. Now, all this is information to me; it may even bring grist to my mill one of these days. I know there is an art in blowing noses as in everything else; but when I penned the sentence which has set all Scotland in a roar I could not say whether a sheriff-clerk depute blows his nose differently from a sheriff-clerk or not.

The whole truth is this. I had finished one of my pathetic sketches to my own satisfaction. One of these days I may let the light in on my capacity for moving to tears as well as to laughter. Meanwhile, I may say that the great thing is to give a pathetic episode a background in the way of descriptions of nature, furniture, and the like, that need not be superstitiously relevant. Here, for example,




is the close of the chapter I have mentioned: "The poor child" (she had heard of the death of her lover, although, of course, he was all alive) "crept slowly up stairs to her room. The lace on her neck drooped. The cat changed its purr into a wail. The sensitive plant in the conservatory gave a sympathetic shudder. At sea the great sails of the frigate flapped drearily. The fireflies danced no more by their own light; the glow-worm put its supper to one side; and in the kitchen the supper bacon ceased to frizzle. Having reached her room Kathelinda threw herself on her bed face downwards, and sobbed and shook. And the bed sobbed and shook. And the wind outside moaned Hugo's requiem. And the express train shrieked out 'Revenge!' as it dashed past. And a distant foghorn gave a strange eldritch yell, like a banshee." I had laid my pen aside, and was looking out of the window of my room, which faces Piccadilly. I do this not idly, but of set purpose. I get all my characters in this way, without being at the trouble of interviewing them, or dining out with them, or worse still, dining in with them. A well-known Q.C. strolled past. Just as he was beneath my window he stopped to blow his nose, no doubt because he had satisfactory reasons for doing so. Out came my note-book and

pencil, and down went, "He blew his nose like a Q.C." In time, no doubt, I should have elaborated this into a "He blew his nose like a Q.C. who is making £15,000 a year, and firmly believes with the poet that briefs are indeed the life of man." I should have done so had not the scene of my next story been laid, by order of my publishers, in Scotland. My hero has to blow his nose there, of course, and why not like a sheriff-clerk depute? The murder is out.

SO INTERESTING.

HER bright but stereotyped smile haunts me still. Nor is there any particular reason why it should not. For it was only in April of this year that I saw her first, the centre of a little group standing in front of Paul Potter's Bull in the Gallery at the Hague. The Demon of Unrest, the Maddening Desire to solve all the Social Problems of the World at once, and the Memory of My Long Lost Love—I was jilted five years ago on the 31st July, and have never forgotten that Black Friday—in addition to the natural craving for a holiday and the worries of the Iron Exchange, drove me to the Continent. I wandered aimlessly into that Gallery—driven by the Unseen Fate which Controls our Destinies—and was carried helplessly up to the little group, consisting of two men and three ladies, of which the eldest lady, with the most modern of Parisian eye-glasses, was obviously the centre and commander-in-chief. She looked steadily at Paul Potter's masterpiece, and, turning to her

group, said, "So interesting." They were all agreed, and said, "Very interesting." I was much struck, not with the high art criticism, but with the profound, and profoundly American, common-sense of the remark. I know all about Paul Potter's Bull, while I am happy to say that I know nothing whatever about Paul Potter, although I have no reason to doubt that he was as estimable and prosperous a citizen as Rubens himself. I know how it was taken and recovered, sold and bought at a fabulous price, and how, indeed, Dutch patriotism was as much concerned with the bringing of it back to the Hague as it was with the rescuing of Holland from the Spaniards. But I had never found anything more in the Bull itself than a large, placid, respectable animal, fit in course of time to take a place—if such could be found in bovine-land—as ruling elder or churchwarden. I never got into raptures over it, and I never had been able to find a proper adjective to describe it, until the American lady hit the nail on the head by describing its portrait as "So interesting." I saw it all then; the Bull is interesting and nothing more—although even that is a good deal. The moment she uttered the thoughts that had arisen in me, without my being able to give proper ex-



pression to them, I became her obedient servant, her *cavaliere servente*—in the American, not the Italian sense. She soon had an opportunity of taking my services. I had occasion to pass her the salt one evening at *table d'hôte*. This naturally led to a conversation on the weather, Mr. W. D. Howells' novels, and Holland, which she found so interesting. I had visited the Hague very often, and so the landlord had become a particular friend of mine; and as he happened also to be on the same terms with my new-made American acquaintances, an introduction was the easiest thing in the world. I need not say who I am. The American commander-in-chief was, I learned, Mrs. Benoni J. Harrison, wife of Benoni J. Harrison, merchant and Congressman *in posse* of Ohio, U.S.A. Her travelling battalion consisted of her husband, the aforesaid Benoni J. Harrison, her two particular young friends, Miss Dorothea S. Vandenhoff and Miss Zenobia N. Browne, and, finally, Mr. Hiram Hamilton Burr, a prosperous and obviously hard-headed lawyer in New York City, and engaged to Miss Vandenhoff. Needless to say I became one of Mrs. Harrison's attendants, and, like everybody else in the company—even Burr—fetched and carried to any amount for her. She told me all about her family, of her two sons who were at West Point, and

her two daughters who were "plumping" at San Francisco. I found it is a regular part of a to-do girl's education in New York to "plump" in other words, to get rid of New England avarities and scragginess, in the warm climate of San Francisco, before making the tour of the world, which is the preliminary to marrying and settling down. Her two particular friends were both "plumped" before leaving for Europe, and thought to some purpose, for to American sprigdom they added the special charm which one is in the habit of associating with Devonshire. I could help murmuring that it was so interesting. She then got to talk of Scotland—which is so interesting, I know, historically—chiefly because her husband and herself were of Scottish origin, and said she must do it before she returned to Amurrika. Then, of course she extracted from me the story of My Long Love, and thought it so interesting. She told it to Miss Zenobia N. Browne. She, too, thought it interesting; but, as I subsequently learned, she was indignant as well—not at me, but at My Long Love. An inveterate and invincible match-maker Mrs. Harrison—having privately and through her husband verified what I had hinted as to my respectable means of subsistence—set to work to b

Zenobia and myself together by leaving us as much alone as she could. Both Zenobia and myself saw her object, and were powerless to frustrate it—so much so that we came to a definite understanding in the Austrian Tyrol. It was rather a tame affair in spite of our romantic surroundings. When Mrs. Harrison was informed of our engagement she said it was so interesting, and carried us off to Scotland. There she took all of my family by storm, seized on my youngest sister, and took her to Amurrika. Burr and myself are to be married at her house in October; and already Zenobia and I write about carpets, social re-unions, and trips, as if we had been married for twenty years, and had become—as, of course, we must become—a second edition of Mrs. and Mr. Benoni J. Harrison. It is so interesting, and so I shall say when I respond to the toast of my health on being married.

I have succumbed—who, under such circumstances, would not have succumbed?—and yet, being in my best moments an unselfish man, I beg to enter my mild protest against the growing tyranny of “So interesting.” Carlyle laments that the great English-speaking nations, notably Great Britain and America, have of late all gone to wind and tongue. Here, however, we have Carlyle’s exaggeration.

These two nations in which, more than in any one ought to be interested, have not gone to wind tongue so much as they have gone to "So interested." In other words, they have lately developed a less for absolutely useless or feckless speech than "intelligent remarks" on a wide range of subjects. "The Age of Ruins is past," wisely remarks Coningsby. True; but the Age of Exhibitions is come; and in the last resort Exhibitions afford means by which all comparatively well-to-do people in the world who have a reasonably common acquaintance with the Standards can find the minimum number of objects so interesting, and make remarks upon them of varying degrees of intelligence. It would, of course, be senseless to deny that a very considerable number of people, especially young people, obtain a large amount of pleasure from Exhibitions, especially when, thanks to ingenious and able caterers, they can get relief from the exhibit entertainments of the chamber concert, "variety switchback kind, and are able to vary "so interesting" with "so funny," or "so exciting," or "so sweet." But it would be a mistake on the part both of young folks and of the old fogeys who frequent Exhibitions to imagine that because they discharge this very easy duty they are acquiring much in

way of knowledge. As a matter of fact, they get impressions which are sometimes right, but which may quite as well be wrong, and which, when they solidify into prejudices or convictions, become that "dangerous thing" which the now too little regarded didactic poet has warned us against.

This is the age, too, of popular lectures on all sorts of subjects by virtually all sorts and conditions of celebrities and authorities, when not only strong drink but the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution is raging. No doubt it is so nice after the work of the day is over, and after a comfortable meal, to spend a couple of hours listening to an expert expounding, in "an eminently popular style," Browning or the phonograph or mediæval art. How naturally does "the lecture was so interesting" come to the tip of the tongue! And how naturally one lays the flattering and Pharisaic unction to one's soul that one has been spending the time profitably as well as pleasantly, laying in a little stock of knowledge against some rainy day of mental vacuity—ever so much more profitably than the benighted people who go to balls and evening parties and don't come home till morning! Here again we must beware of the demoralising effects of "So interesting." If the feeling that prompts to "So interesting" leads the utterer to

further investigation in the particular subject acts as a piquant sauce upon his intelligence. The lecture on Browning or the phonogram or the mediæval art has the appetising effect of a primer or elementary text-book, then all is well. But if, on the contrary, it produces that intellectual fatigue which in the intellectual sphere is the equivalent of ease in Zion, then all is the reverse of what it should be. Even if there were—which there is not—a direct road to knowledge, a lecture is not that road. It may compact knowledge. It may summarise knowledge. Thus a lecture on the Hæphtizim cannot but be a great delight and even an intellectual benefit to one who, say, five years ago, made a study of that too despised conflict which, *pace* Bright, was something more than a battle of the and crows. The knowledge one thus acquired, owing to business or other distractions, have been sleeping in the dormitory of the brain for years. A lecture revives it and gives it life if not actuality. But a more dangerous road to knowledge than a lecture could not well be conceived. From the lecturer's own standpoint, indeed, it is quite intelligible. It simply means in his case the selection of the salient points or essentials of the knowledge he has acquired. He can always

of the treasures of his memory or his notebook, fill up the voids between these salient points. But his hearer, if wise, will not accept his instructor's salient points or essentials for his own. He must discover such for himself, for these ought not to be the basis but the crown, the flower, the apex of knowledge, and can only be reached by difficulty and labour hard. There can be no harm in muttering "So interesting!" to others; it is essentially a gregarious phrase. But whoever mutters "So interesting!" to himself is lost, or at all events is on the intellectual down-grade. The only phrase he should dream of muttering to himself and of his own action is, "So thorough!" and that he will never feel quite justified in muttering on this side of the Styx.

I am going to be Americanised myself in spring—when I return to Europe with my wife five years after this I'll talk of "the fall," unless, indeed, Mr. Edward Bellamy has abolished that along with most other things—but that is no reason why I should not protest against the Americanisation of our Scottish and English society and institutions generally. I have already protested against the passion for "So interesting." It is better, however, to protest against the cause than against the effect, and, therefore, it may be well to object, not only to

"So interesting," but to that gregariousness which is the root of and finds expression in "So interesting." Unquestionably it is not good for man to be always together and it is unwise—because it has a narrowing effect—to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. A man is not alone; on the contrary he forms a part of that great assemblage in which the immortal part no less than the living, when he reads a book, or even thinks—in the true sense, not of morbid brooding, but of genuine reflection and meditation on the great problems of humanity—in other words, it is not good for man to be always together. It is good for him to be sometimes, alone. A main fault I have to find with our American friends is, that they are perhaps unconsciously abolishing solitude—that solitude which, from the religious point of view, was perhaps too much insisted on by the Calvinistic dictators of Scotland long ago. Which, it may be said without any cant, helps to make our grandfathers what they were. For solitude tends to seriousness, and what, after all, is seriousness but an attempt to go behind the "so interesting" superficial aspect of things and get at realities? Under American guidance we, too, are abolishing solitude. We are always together. We eat and drink together; we travel together; we go to

seaside together; we live together, and we would, if we could, die together—saying, as we leave the Planet, that it has been “so interesting.” Now, it would be preposterous—and if it were not preposterous, it would at this time of day be idle—to find fault with the growing taste in this once sombre and still tight little island of ours for gregariousness, to deny that it is in itself a healthy thing, that it sharpens the intellect, that it cheers the heart, that it adds to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But let it not be forgotten that the growth of gregariousness, the passion for “so interesting,” tends to the elevation of the commonplace—what becomes of the sense of proportion in regard to female beauty, for example, when every third girl in every company is “so lovely, don’t *you* think so?”—and to the worship of secondary ideals. Progress means a series of Reactions, and it may be well that we should have a Reaction in favour of solitude as a means not only of resting but of refilling the brain. At any rate, even in these busy days, a place should be found in the time-table of life for “a brief Sabbath of the soul.”

CHRISTMAS ONCE MORE.

"Uncle Muffy, do tell us a Kissmiss Tory," im-
little Quinitina, a sweet, fluffy, little dot, taken
out of an Annual, as she sat, on the evening of
25th December, shortly before the end of
century, on the head of her uncle, Mr. M
topheles Prestwick, who was well known to
prosperous man; indeed, he was simply
in pig-iron warrants. At that moment he
at the height of earthly happiness, for he
in the bosom not of his own—alas! no—but
brother's family. Three nephews sat on one
knees, three nieces on the other; his shoulders
similarly occupied; on his head sat Quinitina.

"Yes, do, Uncle Muffy, and let there be
nice tigers in it," chirruped another voice.

"And alligators!"

"And an albatross!"

"And mind you marry a rich and beautiful
and bring her home to be a good fairy to us

Here Mr. Mephistopheles Prestwick unaccountably turned pale, shuddered, and let fall a few of his brother's children.

"And let it make us all good boys and girls at the end—as good and obedient to mamma and papa every day as we are when Santa Klaus comes."

"I'll do my best, darlings."

Mr. Mephistopheles Prestwick sighed, passed his hand through his luxuriant hair, and fondled his massive watch chain. It gave him some comfort. It was 18-carat. Should misfortune, in the pig-irony of fate, fall upon him, all the fat would not be in the fire. He gave a little cough, swallowed a large lozenge, and began.

CHAPTER I.

"As I was an extra good boy, and my papa was an extra wealthy man, it was, of course, the most natural thing in the world that when I had reached the mature age of sixteen, had carried off all the prizes of my year at the scholastic institution I attended in Glasgow, and had in consequence completely exhausted my nervous and muscular 'system,' he should present me with a hundred pounds, and say, 'Mephistopheles, my son, spend this freely on

a holiday trip. Get an adventure every day I can manage; there is nothing like it for bracing the 'system.' Only practise calling me 'father' instead of 'papa,' and be here at breakfast six months from to-day at 8.30.' I laid in a stock of Jules Verne fictions, revolvers, and the things out in the way of magazine rifles and air-guns. Seeing a cheap trip from Rotterdam to Patagonia advertised, I resolved to spend my money on that. 'Seeing off' having been abolished, I said a simple and stoical 'Ta Ta' to my parents, brothers, and sisters at home, and took train at Hyndland for Queen Street. No special adventure—none that may be found in any ordinary Christmas book—met me till I reached Charing Cross; indeed I was to bank forty winks in accordance with the prescription of one of Jules Verne's or 'Q's'—I forget which heroes, who says that to do this is always a business-wise economy for the future. Just when the train was moving off from Charing Cross something big and bulky jumped into the carriage, and after no more than a moment's hesitation threw itself upon me. Happily, I had been reading a story of adventure in the Rockies a few hours before, and knew at once that I was in the grasp of a grizzly. I was not at all alarmed, for I was aware that the proper ex-

to take under such circumstances is to plunge a penknife right behind the animal's left ear. So I began to feel for my weapon. Having found it with my right hand, I felt with my left for the exact spot into which to plunge it. But at that very moment the carriage, which had been in utter darkness, became ablaze with electric light—how *very* thoughtful of the railway people!—and I saw, from a ribbon round my companion's neck, that it was a performing bear belonging to a travelling circus. It had evidently escaped from its companions, which were, it appeared, in England, and, by taking the cheapest of very cheap trips, had no doubt reached Glasgow by stages. At once I said to myself this was a case for ruling, not by fear, but by love. I addressed the bear by various words of endearment. I tried "Hankee," "Pankee," "Gee-gee," "Coo-ee," "Joey." At "Joey" the grizzly's arms relaxed; it fell back into a corner of the carriage and unmistakably begged for food. I gave it a couple of ham sandwiches and my revolver to play with. It was highly delighted. At Queen Street station I handed it out, and showed to the officials by its ribbon whither it should be sent by parcel post.

The Edinburgh train was about to start, when

I leaped into the first carriage I saw. It had one occupant—a venerable-looking gentleman in a fur-lined cloak, looking for all the world like a stagey Polish Count. When we were all well and away from Glasgow, and bowling along at express speed he suddenly burst into a flood of tears.

"What are you snivelling about, old gentleman?" I shouted to him.

"Oh, kind young sir, I am a shareholder in the Australian banks and a ruined man. Can you lend me eighteenpence to get a bed in Leith? Once there I may be able to secure a job as an able-bodied seaman, and make a living."

"Don't try the confidence trick on me. I know you, Dick Do-All, head of the Long Firm."

With an oath he pulled out a knife and sprang on me. But I had not studied under Jules Verne for nothing. With my left or revolver arm I struck the hand that held the knife; with my left foot I tripped up his right leg. The knife flew out of his hand, he fell on the floor, his coat producing, as he fell, quite a cloud of trump cards, right bowers, dynamos, boxes, and other articles of a "professional" character. In the twinkling of an Elizabethan bed-time I had him pinioned and gagged with the necessary amount of rope, which I invariably carry al-


with me in view of such an emergency. I packed his weapons into my bag, thinking they might come in handy some day. They did. When we reached Winchburgh Tunnel I pitched Dick out. I did *not* look at the evening papers to see if a dead body had been found in the Tunnel. It might have been well, all things considered, if I had looked. Waverley Station was happily in a comfortable condition. I had only to push myself through a crowd of some three thousand persons to get to the train for Leith. When it arrived it was not more than four hours late. So I had but to run down the pier and swim out to sea for some twenty minutes to catch the boat for Rotterdam. I always have had an easy time of it, darlings, except for one event."

Here Uncle Muffy wept and shuddered. Several of his nephews and nieces almost fell off. But they did not; they stuck on; and wiped Uncle Muffy's eye instead. Their united efforts were successful.

CHAPTER II.

"On the way to Rotterdam I had no adventure to speak of—only a trifling little rebellion which I was instrumental in discovering and putting down. In

the night it blew great guns, and I was in consequence pitched out of my sleeping berth. That was fortunate, for it enabled me to hear two sailors, one of them bearded like a pard, and with a *carefully muffled* voice, discussing a plan for securing possession of the ship. Their idea was to stir up the crew to mutiny, murder the captain, officers, and passengers, and then make for Heligoland, where it seems a forgotten pirate had hidden the usual amount of treasure. It was clear from their conversation that they had a map of Heligoland of the most modern description, and in all other respects knew thoroughly what they were about. In a moment I roused the captain. He and I, well provided with pistols, proceeded to the quarters of the crew, beat them up, and after distributing seven rounds of grog, told them of the plot. Without more ado they proceeded to pitch the two conspirators overboard, with a 'Yo! heave ho!' sung out in thoroughly Ancient Mariner style. While discharging this duty the beard and muffled voice of the man I had overheard fell off, and Dick Do-All stood revealed! It was plain that he had escaped from the Winchburgh Tunnel. Somehow I fancied he might escape from the German Ocean as well. As events will show, my fancy did not go so very far astray."



CHAPTER III.

"And now, darlings, I approach the critical period of my life." Here Uncle Muffy again sobbed. Again handkerchiefs and sympathy were in demand.

"It was a very mixed lot that sailed in the good ship 'Vandemonboertronk' from Rotterdam for Patagonia. Ostensibly the object of the men who chartered her—and a very worthy object too—was to take an adequate supply of hollands to the Patagonians, who had been ascertained to suffer much from rheumatism. But there were also some—spectacled, bearded, and sausage-eating—whose mission to Patagonia was purely scientific. Their intention was, by means of measurements, to ascertain whether it is actually the case that there is not a single full-grown Patagonian who is not at least seven feet in height. Curiously or stupidly enough, I did not pay much attention to this section of the passengers of the 'Vandemonboertronk' as they came on board. In the light of subsequent events, I now regret that I was so remiss. Finally I found a third section which contemplated a dash on the South Pole from Patagonia. To this, owing to my love of adventures, I attached myself.

All went well—indeed, drearily well—for a time on

board the 'Vandemonboertronk.' At length we found ourselves in the Gulf of Mexico. I thought it rather strange, I must say, that we should be there, and said so to the captain. He answered, "Trade winds," and I accepted his explanation, as I know that trade winds account for everything, even Mr. Stead's conversion to Spiritualism. But I opened my eyes very widely when he put us all on shore on one of the Little Antilles in the course of a few days, hoisted the flag of the Dutch Republic, and declared that the island was annexed to his Fatherland. Some of us rather objected to this course; and—I suppose in obedience to the law of natural selection—I became the leader of the objectors. We agreed, however, that for a time it would be well to dissemble, and we all pretended to become the Lowest of the Dutch. Seltzogen—a place it will not be found in any of the ordinary maps of the Antilles—is rather a nice place when once you come to know it. There are good plantations in it, and planters—although they are not quite so good—and there are generally plenty of pumpkins about. There, darlings, I met my fate in the shape of the loveliest girl in the world, who fell off her mustang—they have no ponies there, but only mustangs—into my arms. I took her home, and found she was Soyuvcena, the last of the Blincas, the deposed dynasty

of Seltzogenä. She was ravishingly beautiful, and had untold wealth, mostly in the form of ingots and nuggets. It was a case of Romeo and Juliet, and so we told the only duenna she had—a nice old body of an aunt, who knew Seville, and wore a mantilla—that we had better be married by the nearest friar. The aunt, however, thought that we should wait till we were both of age, and I was settled. Meanwhile Soyuvčna was to learn the English language, realise her wealth, and come to Scotland. She used to call me ‘Muffatee,’ in her sweet way, as she passed her hand through my hair; and it was arranged that when she came to Scotland she was to cry ‘Muffatee’ outside my window on Christmas night. I was to know it was she, and to be ready to have ourselves ‘cried’ next Sunday. I am of age—very much so. I have waited every Christmas night to hear ‘Muffatee’ outside my window; I have even left instructions that should I be spending Christmas here she was to come on. But Soyuvčna has never come—never, never, never!”

“Never say die, Uncle Muffy,” said Quinitina.

CHAPTER IV.

“I made up my mind. I gave the aunt my card, and a host of English lesson books for her niece. Ae fond

kiss, and then Soyuvceua and I severed. I summoned my friends and told them my plan. They approved. We marched in a body to the side of the island where the 'Vandemonboertronk' was anchored. The captain and his crew lay asleep on the strand; plainly they had been engaged in testing the hollands. We had no difficulty in mastering the ship, and sang "The Anchor's Weighed." This roused one of the tipsy sailors. He staggered to his feet, rushed into the water, and swam to the 'Vandemonboertronk.' We took him in. It was a mistake, and unchristian besides; for as it turned out in the long run he was no stranger.

The trade-winds were favourable, and we reached Patagonia only a fortnight behind time. The natives were grateful for the remains of the hollands. It had been a bad year for 'the pains,' one of them explained. The scientists of our number resolved themselves into a Special Commission to take the heights—the human heights—of Patagonia. Like most Special Commissions they required an abundance of time; they are in fact engaged at their work yet. I asked the Veiled Lady of Patagonia—they have Shes there as well as in Africa—how I should best get to the South Pole. She said I was Julius Cæsar over again—disguised as Mephistopheles Prestwick—and that she was Pompey's Daughter.

Would I marry her if she guided me to the Pole? Certainly I should—as Julius Cæsar. As Mephistopheles I was pledged in honour to Soyuvцена. The Veiled Lady saw the force of my reasoning, and told me all she could. An island fifty miles from the Pole could be reached across firm ice by sledging. Between that island and the Pole was floating ice; my goal must be reached by balloon. I took a party of volunteers with me; we reached the island in safety. I inflated my balloon, and entered the car; a strange presentiment made me take quite an arsenal of my weapons with me. Just as I was about to give the word “Let her go,” a hoarse voice shouted, “Will you take me with you?” I assented; a man scrambled into the car and threw himself down at the bottom. The balloon bounded up joyously. In two hours as I knew from the chart I had with me we were right above the Pole. It was time to descend. I was looking over the side of the car at this moment when I was suddenly startled by a hideous laugh. I turned, and there, his disguises all off, Dick Do-all once more stood before me! “What,” I exclaimed, not in alarm, but to gain time, “not dead in the Winchburgh Tunnel! Not drowned in the German Ocean!” “That’s pretty plain, I should say,” said Dick, with a malicious grin on his face; “your time has come at last, Mr. Mephis-

topheles Prestwick." "Right you are, Dick," I said, and deftly threw one of his old dynamite boxes at him. It lighted on his head. I need not give further details, for you know how dynamite acts. The engineer was hoist with his own petard—the other way—and distributed through space. But a hole was made in the balloon, and it descended merrily right on the top of the Pole, which is situated on a little grass-grown islet washed by the Antarctic. I anchored the balloon, stitched it, and re-ascended. I need not say more than that exactly six months after I left Glasgow I said 'Good morning, father,' at 8.30 a.m. Children, my story is done."

Mr. Mephistopheles Prestwick lay back in the easy chair. He was in a reverie. The children respected his silence and kept him company in it. Suddenly he rose and looked excitedly at the window. "Dinna ye hear it?" he exclaimed, without any apology to Jessie Brown. All listened intently, and—yes!—above the wailing of the wind, above the music of the Waits, there floated in the sweet word "Muffattee!"

There was a rush to the door, and in there was brought a stately lady costumed by Worth, and speaking English with the purest Inverness accent. Soyuvцена threw herself into the arms of Uncle Muffy.

"I have been detained, darling, but your language is difficult to learn, and my solicitor in Seltzogen advised me to wait for the carrying out of Mr. Goschen's Conversion scheme before realising. I am not too late, I hope; you're not married, Muffattee?"

"Can you ask such a question, dearest?"

"Can we be cried to-morrow, then?"

"I'll see; I hope so, darling; but what about dear old aunty? She's not dead?"

"Dead? Not a bit of it! Look there."

Mephistopheles followed Soyuvcena's eyes. There on the settee sat aunty, with her mantilla curled about her head, and the children round her. She was happy. She was speechless. Quintina was stuffing her with currant bun.

TWO-OUNCE LIFE.

I am really very sorry—and so, I suspect, are many everyday people—that the great newspaper controversy on Drinking and Drunkenness should have come practically to nothing. If only it had actually established for all time to come the doctrine that every human being ought to take two ounces of alcohol into his or her system every day, or, in other words, that every human being is the worse for not taking these two ounces! No doubt, even had this result been arrived at, a Special Commission would have had to be appointed to ascertain exactly what was meant in liquids of the commonplace kind by two ounces of alcohol. I find the lay mind, speaking generally, has very vague notions on the subject. There is my friend Walkinshaw, of Edinburgh, for example. He has discovered that it means a pint of claret at lunch and another at dinner,—precisely indeed, what he has been taking with Quaker-like regularity for fifteen years, and to which he attributes

his various successes in life. Then there is my other friend Stalker, also of Edinburgh. He has devoted his spare time during the past three or four years to studying microbes, sanitation, diet, heredity, and all that sort of thing. He has discovered that our ancestors, speaking generally, were a very stupid, if not a positively bad, lot, because they knew little about microbes, sanitation, and diet, and cared less. His great-grandfather, for example, drank claret—in excess, of course. His grandfather drank sweet ale—in excess, of course. His father drank toddy—in excess, of course. He himself discovered a year or two ago that to correct this excessive alcoholisation, a strain of which must be left in his blood, he must refrain from alcohol. So he took to ginger ale, although he has frankly confided to me that it is fearfully vulgar. For a few years he went on rejoicing, in a modest sub-Pharisaic way, taking two bottles of ginger ale per day, and thanking his stars that he was not as these jog-trot, pint-of-claret, glass-of-whisky-at-night people. But now has come the new medical dictum that life is not worth living, and will inevitably be shortened unless two ounces of alcohol are absorbed daily into the system. He has ascertained, on the best authority, that in certain brands of ginger ale (those, curiously enough, which he himself has most affected) there is

the bare presence of alcohol. Following up this discovery, he has arrived at the conclusion that fourteen bottles of ginger ale contain the requisite amount of alcohol. Poor Stalker is to be pitied, therefore, on account of the amount of fluid which he is compelled to absorb into his system every day! Then there is my other friend Jobson, who, some years ago, read all that the doctors had to say in that dreary magazine symposium of theirs on alcoholics. It ended much in the same way as the more recent newspaper correspondence has done—in smoke or in two ounces. But, then, Jobson is a connoisseur in fine blends of spirits, and, indeed, is the patentee of a magnificent scheme for rescuing “native races” from demoralisation or extinction, not by withholding alcoholics from them, but by supplying them only with rectified alcoholics. He understood somehow that two ounces of alcohol per day were equivalent to a bottle of sound claret, a pint of champagne, or three glasses of old whisky—of the kind, as he once told me at the Club, that these great American doctors now use during operations in place of chloroform or ether. Nor was he taken aback when his friend Jackson, who, in some mysterious way, had obtained possession of a little tumbler for measuring medicines, brought it to him filled up to the two-ounce mark with whisky, poured

the whisky from a tumbler into a wine-glass, and demonstrated that the two ounces were less than such a glassful. He proved quite as capable as Mr. Justice Stareleigh of making a distinction between a door that is ajar and a door that is on the jar. He affirmed that the two ounces meant by the magazine-writing and letter-writing doctors were not two ounces of alcoholic beverage, but two ounces of "the substance alcohol." I am not aware that this substance has ever been found and weighed. I am afraid, indeed, that it is as elusive as other spirits. In its results it may be Caliban; in itself it is Ariel.

But the fact that this now rapidly dying, if not dead, controversy has come to so very little is to be much regretted, and not merely for its own sake. Perhaps if it had been actually ascertained that every human being requires to absorb two ounces of alcohol per day, the discovery might have led to others. If two ounces of alcohol are required, how many ounces of nicotine are needed? is a question that very naturally suggests itself. Then if liquids are to be measured out to us on the ounce principle, why not also solids? For, as all the world now knows, or ought to know, solids can be quite as deleterious as liquids, and indeed according to authorities—in liquids—a good deal more so. De Quincey is by no means the only man who has been

intoxicated by a beef-steak ; Napoleon is not the only commander who has lost a great battle at a critical period of his career through a partiality for onions. Welsh rarebits are probably responsible for more indigestion than all the spirits in bond, or out of it. There is death, or at least danger, even in the breakfast cup, and in the eggs and bacon which that cup washes down. There are "nerves" in the one; there may be unlimited risk in the other, even although it may be said that eggs and bacon, varied with sausages, haddocks, and kippered herrings, constitute the material out of which respectable heads of families and model husbands and fathers are made. But unfortunately even these things—the cheering tea, the upbuilding bacon—are all, and always, taken in excess.

Nothing in nature's sober found,
But an eternal health goes round.

If excess in alcohol is to be stopped by the two-ounce rule, why not also excess in tea and coffee, beef and bacon ? Of course we are all for scientific methods of dealing with moral questions, and certainly the most scientific plan of stopping excess in the gratification of this, that, or the other appetite, is not to knock it off altogether, but to allow it a certain amount of gratification measured by ounces. What could be



easier than for one's doctor—unless, indeed, he should think that his occupation would be gone by his divulging so much of his craft—to make a bill of fare for every day, allowing one so many ounces for this, and so many for that? This bill of fare need not be stereotyped, of course; on the contrary it should vary with the day like other bills of fare. Thus one might be allowed to-day one ounce of nicotine, two ounces of alcohol, three ounces of caseine, and four ounces of beefine, or whatever may be the “ine” that is represented in a joint, while next day he might take four ounces of nicotine, three ounces of alcohol, two ounces of caseine, and one ounce of beefine. Or an arrangement might be made by which one could take all his ounces of a morning at or immediately before breakfast, and so be able to do a day's work without these troublesome interruptions which are caused by having to sit down to a meal every three or four hours or so.

But I do not see why the two-ounce system of life should not be extended beyond the mere sphere of eating and drinking. There are illnesses, for example, which are admirable things in their way—if, of course, they don't go quite too far. Everybody knows now that an attack of typhoid fever, or even of influenza, is, rightly understood, a strengthener of the physical

system and an aid to longevity. I am rather sorry, indeed, to see, and to hear, that the influenza is not yet quite understood as a blessing in disguise. Most folks who have had it, and have spoken to me of their experiences under it, have used language of depreciation and even of loathing. Not yet, at all events, have I heard many people say of the influenza, as I have heard ever so many people say of every other serious ailment under the sun—that does not happen to have laid them under the sod—that it has “readjusted the system” or “re-made the blood,” or in some other way made them infinitely stronger than they were before they were taken ill, or even during the whole of their previous life. On the other hand, what I hear is, “It is the after-effects, my dear fellow, that are the nuisance” or “it is three months since I rose from bed, and I feel lanky yet.” But in any case, an attack of influenza, even of typhoid fever, means a serious interruption with the work of one’s personal, and social, and domestic life, and when all people are liable to it, it is a bad thing—no matter how good it may be for the individual, even if the individual is a scientific man, or a statesman, or a soldier, or a pastor.

they will in course of time find out that they should not make it their business to render us sympathetic to all sorts of scientific in the interest of humanity. I am not suggesting to the scientific world of Europe that the best weapon to fight the influenza virus is the influenza vaccine and that the best way to lay in daily two doses of it. I am not sure be wrong about my proposition. I am quite certain that I am right as to the general principle. With all respect to Professor Huxley and his now famous plan for dealing with the influenza virus with draughts of fresh air I think you cannot get rid of them altogether. You must simply panoply yourself in the proper manner and can, and let the battle be fought out between the opposing battalions to the bitter end. A sage moralist has said that the best way to get on in the world is to ignore one's life and to be about one's affairs. I am much better than a scientific proposition. I am much better than myself—for I am in a position to do the work of the world with all sorts of and confidence and to go on with the allowing of the world to fight out the great battle

in connection with illness, bad health, and all that sort of thing is one's having to waste, in preventing, dodging, or curing, so much of the precious time that ought properly to be given up to work or pleasure. Now, if the complete adoption and scientific application of the two-ounce system could save us even the trouble of thinking about illness, it ought to be welcomed as in the best sense beneficent.

I am convinced, moreover, that, like electricity, the two-ounce system is but in its infancy. Why should it not be tried, for example, in such different departments as literature and morals? Charles Knight had a glimmering of the system—much as Monboddo had a glimmering of the Darwinian theory—when he produced his "Half-hours with the Best Authors." But I suspect half an hour is too much to give even to a very good author, and besides I am not sure that the best method of measuring authors is by minutes. Take, for example, Milton, who, according to Mr. Besant, Mr. Henley, and other authorities, is being greatly neglected in these days. Now, Milton is an admirable moral and intellectual tonic—the best, perhaps, in the whole range of British literature. But it is clear—if, indeed, anything can be said to be clear in this connection—that the safest way of

dealing with such strong things as tonics is to take them by weight. Therefore I should imagine that an ounce of Milton taken, say, of a morning, would be a good preparation for a day of strain and stress in the Iron Exchange. And if Milton be taken in this way, why not Shakespeare and Goethe and Burns?—although I fancy that a very little of Burns, like quinine, ought to go a long way. Then why should not passions be dealt with in precisely the same way as authors? The latest—though not necessarily the best—authorities on passions tell us that instead of being bad things in themselves, they are good things when indulged in homœopathically. Two ounces of love may be admirable, but a ton, or even a stone, may be, and as a rule is, perilous in the extreme. Let the Pilgrim of Love therefore call in the scientific specialist and ascertain how much in this way he can indulge in with due regard to the interests of all concerned. Similarly the person who believes in “Platonic love” or “friendship,” or who wishes simply to be regarded as “a brother,” might be put upon the ounce system.

I see a danger ahead, however. Barbarism has before now had its innings when pitted against a too buckram civilisation. There are those who proclaim to what they term the sensual world that

one hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name, and who look forward to the time when the passions, cramped no longer, shall have scope and breathing space. Possibly enough, too, attempts may be made in the future, as they have been made in the past, to translate such sentiments into action. But revolts of this kind are destined to final failure, even if they meet with a temporary success. The *Pax Britannica* is preferable to a Revolution, however glorious. And the true *Pax Britannica* is the peace of the two-ounce system. The Perfect Man will be found to be the perfectly poised—and perfectly avoidupoised—man.

THE AUTHENTIC HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

The following is, a digest, which I trust will be found useful by School Boards and their teachers, of a forthcoming and eminently original History of Scotland from (indeed from before) the earliest times to the present day. I have not consulted manuscript or other works in the British Museum or the Advocates' Library, because I have found it quite sufficient to peruse modern authorities on our national history, such as Anderson, Skene, Froude, Skelton, Gardiner, Clifford, Donnelly, Blackie, the Ramsays (the Dean and John of Ochtertyre), and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe.

CHAPTER I.

Cave or Prehistoric Scotland.—I have been convinced by the Hon. Ignatius Donnelly, the lustre of whose *New Atlantis* has been somewhat dimmed by his immortal exposure of that vulgar charlatan


and drunkard William Shakespeare, but which ought to be widely read nevertheless, that the home of the original Scottish folks was Heligoland. They reached Heligoland from what is now known as America. How they reached America is not quite clear, and is of no consequence. The researches of the ingenious and anonymous author of "Ancient and Modern Britons" have rendered it absolutely certain also that the original Scots were quite black. That did not matter, however, as all the world was black then, a good deal blacker indeed than it has ever been painted. Our ancestors became white through exposure to the sea foam, the Scots Marriage Law, and care. Dr. Anderson has thrown a flood of light upon the manners and customs of this interesting people. They had a great deal of brass about them; but then, contrary to the popular fashion of the present day, they carried it to their graves with them. But their greatest peculiarity was their weakness for saving up for a tombstone, and still more, for an orgie on funeral-day. This has become a national characteristic, for even now (see the Ochtertyre Memoirs, vol. ii., p. 75) the Scotsman's last good night takes the form of this injunction to his heir as to the treatment of coffin-bearers—"For God's sake, John, give them a hearty drink!" The cave-

Scots held out as long as they could. But, thanks to good scholastic discipline, they did not forget their *memento mori*. They caved in in the long run.

CHAPTER II.

Scotland in the Time of the Romans.—This is the “Snakes in Iceland” or “Aiken Drum’s Lang Ladle” period of the national history. The Romans never penetrated into Scotland. It is true that a young Italian romancist, named Tacitus, who was the Mr. Rider Haggard of his day, did, by way of holiday excursion, travel from Londinum, which was very much what Durban is now, as far north as Forfarshire. There he fell in with a prosperous young farmer, to whom he has given the appropriate name of Agricola, that entertained him much as Dandie Dinmont entertained Harry Bertram, and filled his head with what they termed even then auld warl’ stories. Tacitus, although a quiet man—as, indeed, his name shows—was, like most quiet men, fond of his joke, and, with the help of Agricola, had a few stones—(they were easily obtained from the Galloway dykes which were then the vogue)—arranged with artistic looseness here and there all over the country


in the form of Roman camps. When he returned to Londinum, he wrote a romance in the "Allan Quartermain" vein, which sold remarkably well at the time, and is still occasionally read. The speech of the mythical Galgacus to his mythical Caledonians is a very successful performance in its way. But there was a joint in Tacitus' harness, and it was discovered by the lynx eye of Mr. David Laing or of Mr. Andrew Lang—at this moment I do not remember which. For centuries it was believed that "Mons Grampius" was the scene of the long talk and short fight between Agricola and Galgacus, and that the eminently historical personage Norval, who, frugal swain that he was, fed his flocks on the Grampian Hills with his own verbiage, was the descendant of Galgacus, as Owen Glendower and Sir Edward Watkin are descendants of the old Scoto-Welsh kings. But it has now been discovered that what Tacitus actually wrote was "Mons Gropius"—i.e., the hill that has to be hunted or groped for, or the spot-me-who-can mountain. He could no more help putting his secret into this phrase than could Shakespeare help putting his into his cryptogram. "Mons Gropius" is equivalent to the "Search No. II." which brought Herr Herman Dousterswivel to his ruin.



CHAPTER III.

The Pre-Edwardian Era.—In this chapter the chief historical material is a bundle of negatives, and, as is well known, it is impossible to make a good photograph out of that. Thus it has been demonstrated about the Celts—and very little else has been demonstrated about them—that they did *not* wear the kilt, which was invented by a trooper in Marshal Wade's army; nor the skenedhu, which was first made in honour of the late Historiographer Royal for Scotland; nor the dirk, which was so named by a Sheffield blade, an admirer of the ruffian-hero of "Guy Mannering." As for the raids of the Scots or Picts into the England of Vortigern and King Arthur, which are said to have led to Romanised Britons giving a call to Hengist and Horsa, historical scepticism has clearly proved that this is but an old rendering of the habit which selected or *picked* Scotsmen still have of finding their way to the South in search of fame or fortune. They accomplished their ends by doing homage to King Lud and his successors, or by what our typical Scotsman Sir Pertinax Macsycophant styled "booin'." Thus it was that Scotland never had any independence, and thus it is still that our young

advocates, who have by way of education gone South for a year or so, say "My Lud" by mistake and unconsciously when they address a Lord-Ordinary for the first time. Scotland was a kind of Irish stew of races for a few centuries—Saxons, Normans, Danes, Norwegians, Northumbrians, even rugged Yorkshiremen and hale Lancashire lads. The Irish element was contributed by Columba and his followers, who sailed from Belfast to Argyllshire in their own fish-creels. There need be no scepticism about them, for have they not built Fingal's Cave, and sprinkled Iona with lovely ruins, and did they not settle in Culross, where they made girdles which were famous even in the days of Jeanie Deans? As for the Scottish kings and queens from the days of Conal to those of the Maid of Norway, they were a decidedly shadowy, if not a shady lot. One or two of them were notable. Among these was Macbeth, who, although a singularly pious man that has been shamefully maligned by William Bacon, had his holy raptures. In one of them, when a scoundrel named Macduff said things to him that would have provoked a saint, he introduced what is very vulgarly known as the big big D into Scotland, and which is still to be found in some parts, notwithstanding the energetic efforts



of the Churches to eradicate it. There was also Malcolm, who set the mischievous practice of "taking an eke" (hence his name, "Can—more"), which is only now yielding to afternoon tea, and who, having taken one too many in Alnwick lost his head altogether. There was David the Just, who built churches and colleges, and, which is far more important, fostered journalism to such an extent that he fought the battle of the *Standard* in England, coming to grief like most men who interfere in the interests of folks that are quite capable of taking care of themselves. There was William the Lion, who showed how he deserved the name by which he is known by acknowledging the suzerainty of England, and recording in a State document that Scotland is its "knuckle-end." Finally, there was Alexander the Third, who first established in Scotland the habit of dying from the bad effects of being thrown from one's horse, which prevailed in the sister (and superior) Kingdom from the days of William the Conqueror to those of William of Orange.

CHAPTER IV.

Early Social History of Scotland.—It is clear that there were slaves in early Scotland, and that,

as in America, though their skins might be black, their hearts were pure as the driven snow. There was only one St. Uncle Tom in the United States, but, as is fully proved by the works of Father Hunter Blair, Dr. Alphons Bellesheim of Cologne, Mr. David Beveridge, and others, there were two St. Serfs in Scotland. Glasgow was founded by Mungo, who beneath the tonsure of a monk concealed the brain of a bailie and the genius of a merchant prince. He drifted out one day in an osier basket from Culross into the open sea in search of a river port for Scotland. He shook his head at Granton and Leith as he passed, and the sand bar at the mouth of the Dee disgusted him. The sea was rough in the Pentland Firth, and Mungo remembered nothing more after passing Cape Wrath till he stranded at the Broomielaw. Here he woke up, and, there passing before his mind a vision of all the wonders that would be—including the report of the Boundary Commission—he declared emphatically in the monkish French of the day, *J'y suis, J'y reste*. Glasgow has flourished ever since by taking Mungo's word for its own. "Bonnie Dundee" is a cruel joke of Sir Walter Scott's; somehow it reminds one of "Peebles for pleasure." It is quite a mistake to imagine that Edinburgh was founded

by Aidan or Edwin, for the good reason that these personages are as mythical as Mrs. Harris. The origin of the name is this:—The citizens of the town, then styled “Auld Reekie,” on account of the huge fires that had to be kept burning to scorch holes in the east wind, were in the habit of holding convivial gatherings as a sort of defiance to what Mr. R. L. Stevenson styles “one of the vilest climates under heaven.” At a dinner given by the Lord Provost to the Magistrates and Town Council, consisting mainly of cockie leekie, caller herrin’ new drawn frae the Forth, howtowdies from the “Noctes Ambrosianæ,” sheep’s head from Muttonhole, oyster patties from Jock’s Lodge, capercailzie from Habbie’s How, and Butter Scotch from Bonny Dalmeny, the question of rechristening the town came up for discussion. The Lord Provost suggested that it should be styled what it was—the Dining-out-Borough. At that moment, however, the Provost’s little boy came in with the dessert. Having eaten first the white puddings and then the black, and scratched what, in the sweet Arcadian “Lallan” of the place and period, was known as his “heid,” he suggested that the name might with ease be at once shortened and Latinised by changing it into E-dine-borough. The lad’s proposal was carried *nem. con.*, and as Edin-

burgh the town has been known ever since. In the first MS. of Burns's well-known poem, Edinburgh is described as "Scotia's *dining seat*." But some of the poet's boon companions of the Crochallan Fencibles and the Caledonian Hunt objected to the adjective, and he altered it to the feeble sentimentalism which appears in all modern editions of his works. This period witnessed the rise of universities, bannocks, and trade guilds. Salt herrings, jocktelegs, sneeshin, and the wee drappie in the e'e are among the national institutions which may with tolerable safety be traced to this period.

CHAPTER V.

The Beginning of Scotland's Woes.—The Maid of Norway, who died of too much fulmar at St. Kilda, left strict instructions in her will that she should be succeeded by her undoubted Lord Paramount, Edward the First of England, and one of the kindest, wisest, and most far-seeing of monarchs. Edward at once took possession of his inheritance, and for two years Scotland enjoyed peace and prosperity. But there were some grumblers who had a vision of Scottish Independence. They found a leader in William Wallace, one of the four bad men—the other three

are Robert Bruce, John Knox, and Dalrymple of Stair—who have reduced Scotland to its present condition. Wallace was not a Scotsman at all, but a Walloon, as is shown by his being described as *vir illustrissimus* in the Town Council books of the Flemish towns which he visited after leading Scotland such a dance. At anyrate he has been proved by Clifford, the greatest of British historians, to have been a sad loon—so much so that Mr. Andrew Lang, who has proved himself a distinguished Scottish patriot by annexing the whole of English literature, is understood to have told a St. Andrews audience (this was before he became Gifford Lecturer) that the so-called protector and guardian of Scotland was a bit of a brigand. But Wallace induced a number of misguided people to follow him in thwarting the philanthropic designs of Edward, and although he was ultimately and very properly betrayed, decapitated, and quartered, his miserable work was continued by Robert Bruce, who was no more a Scotsman than Wallace was, being, in fact, a Norman ne'er-do-weel, "wanted" for an exceptionally brutal murder committed in Dumfries. I infer from Sir Archibald Geikie's *Scenery of Scotland*, that there never could have been such an engagement as the Battle of Bannockburn. The truth is that the English got tired of killing the Scots out of

kindness, and let them severely alone. Lowland Scotland has never quite recovered from this blow. Rather oddly, too, she did not like the idea of the Highlanders doing what she had done. When, in 1411, under Donald Fibroch, Lord of the Isles and the Macs, they rose and asked for Home Rule north of the Grampians, they received a crushing and coercive "No" from the Lowlanders, who were led by the Earl of Mar (but not of Kellie), and the then member for North Aberdeen. The battle between the Separatists and the Unionists is known as "The Red Harlaw." This is ethnologically interesting, for it proves that the black Scots were changing colour at this time, and were taking red on the way to white.

CHAPTER VI.

Facilis Descensus.—From the ascent of Robert Bruce to the Union of the English and Scottish Crowns in the person of James I. is—unless an exception be made of the present time—the Dark Age of Scottish History. A band of thieves, humorously calling themselves nobles, and known by such names as Douglas, Scott, Stuart, the Wolf of Badenoch, and the Bloody Mackenzie, seized the country, divided it between them, and so tyrannised over the people that

whenever Scottish mothers wished to make their children obedient they whispered the awful words *noblesse oblige*. The so-called kings stabbed each other, or were poisoned by the nobles, who were strung up in succession at Hairibee. Certain of their number, personally conducted by the Admirable Crichton, travelled in France, and brought back with them poetry, claret, and gunpowder. Some Scotsmen tried to write in the French style—particularly William Dunbar, Gavin Douglas, George Buchanan, David Lindsay, and William Drummond. But their performances were very poor—indeed, Scotland had no literature to speak of till the present day, and that although there was a good deal of talk during the last century and during this too about three writers—Robert Burns, Walter Scott, and Thomas Carlyle. But they have all been found out and deposed by Mr. Stevenson and others. So, indeed, have Shakespeare, Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, and a number of other impostors. Burns was a kind of literary sweater. Most of the best verses attributed to him were written by Lapraik and Siller, and polished by Gavin Hamilton in Mauchline, and Dugald Stewart in Edinburgh. As for Scott, every one who is at all a judge allows his plots are not to be compared with Miss Braddon's; as a stylist he is not to be

named in the same breath with Mr. W. E. Norris and Mr. Rider Haggard. Carlyle, in the intervals between maltreating his wife and crying *Ay de mi!* wrote some delirious rubbish and styled it history. Nobody reads it now. Scotland got on better with claret than with poetry. It was brought into Leith from Bordeaux in enormous quantities, and was sold on draught in the streets of Edinburgh at a penny a quart. When first gunpowder was smuggled into Scotland it did not take well to its new surroundings—it took the first opportunity of going off. Mons Meg destroyed the Castle Rock of Edinburgh three times by bursting; finally it was spiked by the Porteous mob. Shipbuilding began to take its place among national industries in the Dark Age of Scottish history. Sir Andrew Wood & Co. were the first of the great Clyde firms, and built the three celebrated warships, the “White Caravel,” the “Yellow Frigate,” and the “Curse of Scotland.” Sir Andrew retired on a fortune, when well up in life, to a pretty little house built on the compartment principle on the summit of Largo Law.

CHAPTER VII.

The Scotland of Mary Stuart, who might have been Mary Knox.—John Knox was the third of Scotland's

evil-doers. It is unnecessary after the recent discoveries of Mr. Skelton and others to prove that the Reformation was, next to the establishment of its independence, the greatest misfortune that befel our poor country, and everybody knows what the Reformation was. But it is not so generally known that Knox was a lover of Mary Stuart. It is difficult to understand why Mary should have had so many admirers. She was, like a fair maid of Modern Thrums, a snod bit body when busked up a bit, but she was not a patch (although she wore more than one) on any of the professional beauties of our own day. John fell in love with her, however, as did everybody else. Nor is it quite certain that Mary did not for a time return John's love. The curious phrase, *Ego nudata sum*, which appears in one of the Casket Letters discussed by Mr. Skelton, rather tends to show that she did feel attracted to him. As Mr. Skelton proves, the phrase could not have been meant literally. The letter was written on a cold winter night, when Mary could scarcely have carried on her correspondence in the costume which the brilliant Irishman described as that of "Cleopatra before Canova." Besides, whatever may be said to Mary's detriment, she was not a shiftless character. But interpret the language meta-

phorically and it comes simply to this, "I lay bare my inmost soul to you," which every clergyman's *fiancé* writes to him every second day in every three-volume novel. That letter, then, was written not to Bothwell, but to Knox. But John and Mary did not agree—what a different Scotland it would have been if they had agreed! She declined to call Sunday "Sawbath," and insisted on having a piano after marriage, on which no doubt she would have played *chansonnettes*. John became jealous of David Rizzio and in the guise of Ruthven killed him, and also of Maitland of Lethington, partly because Maitland had anticipated him in securing the Scottish Secretaryship, then as now the political Blue Riband of our country. He finally married the daughter of Lord Edie Ochiltree, some of whose relatives were living in the time of Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Final Blow.—Between the Union of the Crowns and the Union of the Legislatures, Scotland had only one gleam of sunshine. This was her conquest by the Commonwealth, or the Blessing of Cromwell. He gave her Free Trade, Jeddart Justice, and good roads. He impressed upon Scottish ministers the desirability

of believing they could be mistaken. He also introduced stone fruit and jargonelle pears into the North. He gave Scotland a crowning mercy and England a sauce at Worcester. But after Cromwell came the Deluge of woes unspeakable—the Restoration, the Revolution, Cameronianism, the boot, Lauderdale, Perth, Graham of Claverhouse, and William Carstares. Finally came the Union itself, which was accomplished by the two Stairs, father and son, who bought over to the English side the members of the two Houses of Parliament at the modest figure of £2 a head. Altogether it was a back-Stairs intrigue, but it was successful, although it was opposed by the two greatest patriots Scotland ever produced, Fletcher of Saltoun and Lord Belhaven, who proposed a very pretty *via media* between Independence and Absorption in the shape of Home Rule.

CHAPTER IX.

The Lowest Deep.—The history of our country since the Union of 1707 is one of steady political, commercial, and social decline, as shown by the deplorable condition of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen, and the income tax returns for Scotland generally. The English dialect is taught in

Scottish schools. English dance and comic-opera music is played in Scottish drawing-rooms, on pianos imported from London. English bitter ale is employed in Scottish dining-rooms to wash down English roast beef and Welsh mutton. There is a talk of establishing Chairs of Scottish in the universities! There is a "kistfu' o' whustles" in every third church, which it is now vulgar to call a "kirk." Scottish business in Parliament is neglected; indeed her members are told by their English masters that Scotland has no business to have any business at all. When the member for the College Division of Glasgow, or North Aberdeen, or the Border Burghs, rises to make a speech, Mr. Asquith, or Mr. Fowler, or some other of the *jeunesse dorée* of the Treasury bench, interrupts him with such rude observations (followed by "roars of laughter," lasting for ten minutes), as "Pump up the wut, Scotty," "What's whisky the gallon, Sawney?" "Yaive forgot your philabeg," "Take a rest and a wully waught," or "Is haggis cheap to-day?"

CHAPTER X. AND LAST.

Scotia rediviva.—Hope springs eternal in the human breast. The Scottish Home Rule movement initiated

by Professor Blackie is destined to carry all before it. In my mind's eye I see the Scottish State re-established, with Lord Rosebery for its Uncrowned King or "undooted pawtron," Mr. R. L. Stevenson as its poet laureate, Professor Drummond as its chaplain, and either the member for Caithness or the member for North Aberdeen (the choice to be made after a public examination) as its Premier. I see the Scottish Commons (there will be no Scottish Peers except Lord Rosebery) sitting once more in the old Parliament House, speaking the old Scottish tongue with the dear old Edinburgh accent, and compelled by statute to intimate beforehand to their audience "the heids" of their discourses, on pain of losing their own. Above the door of every bank, every counting-house, every office, every shop, every school, I see inscribed the words "Nae English need apply." I see our historical sceptics and literary iconoclasts advancing under the banner of Home Rule from victory to victory. They have done much already; but there is a wonderful overgrowth of superstition and *aberglaube*, and a terrible tangled underwood of mental confusion to remove. I am convinced, in short, that

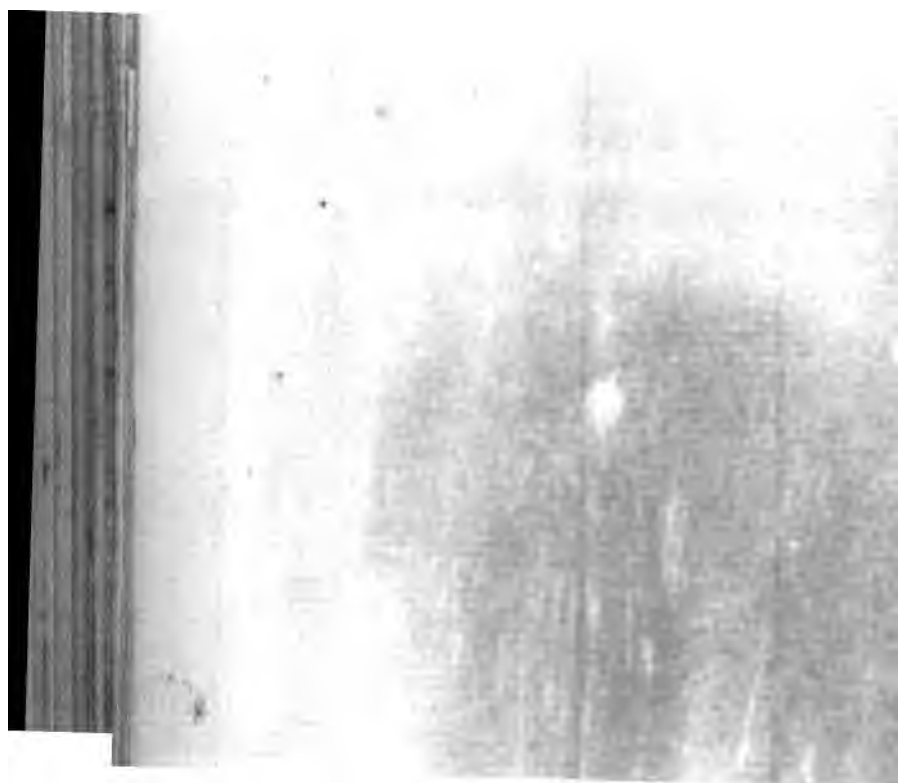
Scotland won't flourish till each peasant learns
His Songs are not by David, and his Psalms are not by Burns !

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